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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

THE DISCOURSE OF ARCTIC LANDSCAPE IN CHILDREN'S FICTION

by

MARY WESTCOTT

©

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

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ENTITLED The Discourse of Arctic Landscape in Children's Fiction

SUBMITTED BY Mary Westcott

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF Master of Arts

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DATE: JUNE 10, 1991

ABSTRACT

The evolution of the discourse of arctic landscape in English literature for young readers reveals the very human urge to render the treeless northern wilderness of Canada compatible with human existence. In the early 1800s, at a time when arctic exploration was being undertaken with determination and imperial enthusiasm, the matter-of-fact voice of reportage dominated literary efforts to describe exotic scenes that had never been experienced or even imagined by those who stayed at home. Later in the nineteenth century, the vastly popular adventure genre exhibited confidence in the ability of humankind to accomplish a subjugation of the land. In addition, the exaggerations of the romantic and sublime literary conventions, common in the late 1800, helped to extol the heroism involved in mastery of the northern wilderness.

The first decades of the twentieth century produced a discourse in children's fiction that actively removed any mystery or magic that may have lingered in the imagery of landscape up to this point. Authors undertook to illustrate that the barren northern wilderness was no longer a fearful, unknowable region. However, the developing genre of naturalistic animal stories emphasized both a physical and spiritual bond between humans and the natural world that remained indefinable.

The discourse of arctic landscape, in the latter half of the 1900s, retains the language of the naturalists, insisting on the recognition of a bond between humankind and the natural world that reflects the environmental and ecological concerns of the era. In addition, the Inuit discourse admits no notion of the Romantic or the Sublime in arctic landscape; rather, it speaks of the desire to survive within a harsh environment through land management, acceptance of the ways of nature, and conformation to what is locally believed to be required by nature.

Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, authors writing for children have interpreted the arctic landscape as a site where human beings can exist physically,

psychologically, and spiritually, within the parameters set and controlled by the natural world.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Fictional works for children that are set in untreed, vast, and sparsely inhabited arctic regions use the landscape fundamentally to order and render acceptable a specific environment that appears to defy and reject the possibility of any benevolent interaction between it and humanity. Studied individually, these works seemingly promote a concept of the northern landscape as an antagonist, an enemy that must be defeated or neutralized. From the early works, which frequently demonstrate battles against the land and triumph over the environment, to the more recent ones, which emphasize comprehension and acceptance of the harsh aspects of the land, the common factor is invariably one of contest between elements in the land and human beings. Yet, viewed collectively, these dramatized encounters with the arctic landscape project an image of this environment that is not one of antagonism. Rather, the image culminates in something that is familiar and knowable, by which "arctic" as a concept can comfortably be appropriated as a constituent part of human existence.

The Arctic has long been the subject of literary production and consumption. In *The Arctic Grail*, Pierre Berton notes: "For forty years, since Parry's triumphant return in 1820, the British had been fed a steady diet of published Arctic journals (seventeen dealing with the Franklin search alone), each featuring tales of appalling hardship, dreadful brushes with death, and hairbreadth encounters with wild animals" (336). The reading public encouraged this publishing trend with its eager reception of daring and adventurous exploits that took place in the far northern wilderness of a new land.

The emerging body of literature that uses the Arctic as setting has, layer by layer, laid a foundation for, and then constructed, an identifiable image of what the arctic landscape is or can seem to be. The urge to write about this landscape reveals a very human desire for constructing a "home" (or at least the possibility of home) in all corners of

the world. As the perception of our world grows smaller, the concept of a "global village" extends to regions less inhabited or touched by civilization in our effort to understand them and incorporate them into the holistic notion of the world functioning as one entity. The Canadian Arctic, as an example, then becomes but one of the globe's constituent parts. The effort that authors have made to define "arctic" and find meaning in the nature of the Canadian northern landscape can be considered as representative of the international reach to incorporate the physical and psychological realities of wilderness spaces into the meaning of human existence.

Much has been written about "land" and "wilderness" as it occurs in Canadian literature. In *The Haunted Wilderness: The Gothic and Grotesque in Canadian Fiction*, Margot Northey explores menace, terror, destruction, and evil in works which utilize unsettled and empty landscape as symbols for these gothic elements. The qualities of nightmare encountered in the natural environment become mirrors for the dark components of life and human nature, according to the authors she discusses. Perceived distortions or deformities signify human depravity and the gradual elimination or absence of civilized values. Those who experience physical disorientation, darkness, silence, and inaction imposed by the landscape, psychically and emotionally suffer a corresponding estrangement from their community and from any known meanings about the self and the world. They mentally inhabit a malevolent environment full of lurking horrors and threatening violence and death. Thus Northey discerns a close relationship in these works between the natural world and "the dark wilderness of the mind," which is often represented in the form of madness (61).

Northey's applied analysis can serve to aid in critically examining nearly any work that is situated in an uninhabited land. However, she does not specifically address the Arctic as setting. A work that does is *The Northern Imagination: A Study of Northern Canadian Literature*, by Allison Mitcham. This study examines works of fiction that project a variety of images evoked by the isolated and barren land of northern Canada. As

a site for human spiritual salvation and renewal, the frozen wilderness and its animal and human inhabitants often represent an idealized innocence. The works that Mitcham discusses frequently juxtapose the purity of the North against the decadence and dehumanization of the civilized South, setting up a conflict between the "natural" and "artificial" elements of the respective environments. The implied threat directed, not from, but at the wilderness and its native inhabitants invokes the gothic horror identified by Northey.

Concurring with Northey, Mitcham notes isolation, imprisonment, and violence as universal themes in the works she examines. She adds, however, that in some cases these are developed in a positive manner. For those who seek a close alliance with the natural rhythms of the land and develop an intuitive understanding of this environment, wilderness solitude offers a necessary frame for developing spiritual self-awareness. Imprisonment and harsh realities inflicted by the land provide a testing ground for physical and mental characteristics. Concomitant with the challenge that landscape offers human beings is the depiction of the land and its elements as human-like agents of vengeance, utilizing violence as just punishment for human beings who exhibit lack of self-control, integrity, or unity with nature. On occasion, the natural world is represented as the site and substance of a necessary violence that is controlled and rational, wherein nature seems to require a wise use of brute force for physical survival and preservation of individual identity. Mitcham points out that Frederick Philip Grove considered the intense trials involved in wilderness survival a "contest with a land which, to ordinary men, seems unconquerable" (69). This contest can be relished, according to Grove, as an opportunity for physical and psychological development, although he also described it as "an adventure of nearly overweening daring to stay in the north of this western world." Mitcham's work reveals two major perceptions of arctic landscape found in Canadian fiction. The characteristics which constitute this unique environment, and the impact they have on those who enter its spaces, can offer up the gothic terror and nightmare of Northey's examples, or provide a

vision of hopefulness directed toward the attainment of a life perfected by physical and spiritual unity with nature.

The analytic work that has hitherto been done on Canadian fiction set in the arctic landscape has concentrated primarily on that written for adults. Children's literature has not received as much attention with regard to landscape presentation, yet deserves to be considered, inasmuch as it presents a discourse that influences the perspectives with which young people view their world. Each literary portrayal of human existence in the Arctic serves as a building block in constructing a cohesive image of the north that contributes to the perception of the earth as "home." A significant proportion of these literary building blocks has been contributed by the myriad perceptions and semiotic relationships proposed by authors who have selected the treeless, cold, and rocky wilderness of the Canadian Arctic as the site for works of fiction aimed at young readers.

This study is a critical analysis of the discourse that has been utilized to portray the Canadian Arctic in realistic juvenile fiction. The focus is directed on works of realism inasmuch as they more openly attempt to define, describe, and explain the Arctic than do works that deal with mythical, legendary, and supernatural material. No attempt is made to evaluate the merit of either prose or representation in the works discussed. Nor is this study intended to render an historical survey of children's literature. The narratives included are a representative sampling of juvenile fiction that has been published in English since the beginning of the nineteenth century. Arranged in historical groups, these works, selected from some five dozen books, exemplify the variety of approaches in which arctic landscape has been presented to children since the era when "children's books" are considered to have first been produced (Demers xi). The phrase, "children's literature," is a nebulous one that puts no clear boundaries on either age group or level of reading achievement of the intended audience.[1] The works included in this study have been written with a youthful audience in mind, or comprise a presentation, content, and level of

complexity that is compatible with adolescent readers.[2] Picture-books and works for beginning readers have been excluded, due to the limited amount of text they contain.

While Northey's fundamentally gothic elements are clearly present in many of these works, most frequently the landscape suggests the positive aspects discerned by Mitcham. To varying degrees, the landscape is a place of extreme danger; however, its threatening nature is often incorporated into a more favorable image that renders the environment fascinating and desirable. Romanticized at times, the arctic regions can even become the most beautiful and loveliest of lands. The arctic discourse that has evolved in children's literature through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries has taken varied, and sometimes contradictory, courses. Nevertheless, it has been consistent in its direction toward portraying the landscape, comprised of living inhabitants, physical geography, and spiritual essence, as a site that can be understood. The human urge to understand the arctic environment that these works represent reflects a desire to come to terms with the elements in the land, in order to render them compatible with human existence. Fundamentally, the discourse directed at children in their literature assures that life can be maintained and perpetuated within the arctic landscape.

CHAPTER II

BOOKS OF INSTRUCTION AND ADVENTURE IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

British aesthetic response to the natural world lies at the base of literary and artistic discourse regarding arctic landscape. Linguistic tropes of both the Sublime and the Picturesque, evident in English prose and poetry in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, appear as rhetorical devices which invest the unfamiliar physical world with meaning in narratives that report the discoveries of early arctic exploration.[3]

In the seventeenth century, the Sublime had religious and soul-enhancing connotations. Marjorie Hope Nicolson makes this point (282-83) in discussing the theory of the Sublime put forth by John Dennis in 1688. To Dennis, environmental upheavals and disasters, such as volcanoes and famine, gave evidence of the awe-inspiring power of God, and, as such, evoked pleasure and rapture which he believed to be the essence of the Sublime. Nicolson summarizes his theory: "God and the angels, the glory and immensity of the heavenly bodies, the vastness of the seas and mountains on earth--these were the 'extraordinary hints,' the causes of the Sublime" (283). The quality of terror was explored later by Edmund Burke in *A Philosophical Enquiry Into the Origin of the Sublime and Beautiful*, published in 1757. Walter John Hipple analyzes Burke's notion of the Sublime, noting that his emphasis is on horror:

> "The passion caused by the great and sublime in *nature*, when those causes operate most powerfully," Burke declares, "is astonishment; and astonishment is the state of the soul in which all its motions are suspended with some degree of horror. . . . All general privations," Burke continues, "are great, because they are all terrible; *Vacuity, Darkness, Solitude*, and *Silence*." Greatness of dimension, too, is sublime, and infinity fills the

> mind with that "delightful horror" which is the essential effect of sublimity. . . . (89, 90)

However, Hipple adds a cautionary observation: "Burke does not say--note well--that the sublime is always terrible; it is *either* terrible, *or* associated with something terrible, *or* acts upon us like the terrible" (87). In "The Arctic Sublime," Loomis observes: "Edmund Burke, had he written his analysis of the sensational causes of the Sublime a century later than he did, might well have used the Arctic in his discussions of light and dark, sound and silence, obscurity, solitude, vastness, and magnificence as sources of sublime astonishment and terror" (102-03). The Arctic, eminently suitable as a site for the Sublime, appeared mysterious and unknowable to those who ventured into it. Its unfamiliar qualities, which could distort perception and disorient observers, led those who wrote about the landscape to extend sublimity into the realm of the magical and supernatural.

To perceive any terrain in the Arctic as picturesque requires a certain determination on the part of the observer to seek out a site that will conform, at least in part, to the characteristics understood to render a spot in the landscape harmonious and pictorial, as I.S. MacLaren suggests (*Arctic* 90). A picturesque rendering of landscape involves the depiction of a background, such as mountains or jagged cliffs, which contain the scene, preventing the eye from gazing off into infinity. Foreground and middle ground, enlivened by objects of interest and variety, are flanked by natural verdure, hummocks, or other features which serve to enclose and frame the view. The Picturesque, suggestive of peaceful harmony within nature, commonly invites the notion of human habitation through the customary characteristic of secure, comfortable repose, often accompanied by a romantic emphasis on an abundance of animal and plant life.[4]

Firmly imbedded in early exploration narratives, the Sublime and the Picturesque are recurring topoi that dominate arctic discourse up to the end of the nineteenth century, appearing less frequently after the turn of the century.

The Canadian Arctic has provided subject and setting in reading materials for young readers for nearly two centuries. Two examples published in the early 1800s reflect the fascination for the reading public of the journals and accounts of the European men who visited and explored the essentially unknown territory. *Northern Regions: or, A Relation of Uncle Richard's Voyages for the Discovery of a North-West Passage* was published anonymously in London in 1825. The frame for the narration consists of two young boys, Tom and Charles, listening to "Uncle Richard" every evening as he tells of his adventures on board the *Hecla* with Captain Parry during the 1819-1820 expedition to Melville Island. *Arctic Travels: or, An Account of the Several Land Expeditions to Determine the Geography of the Northern Part of the American Continent*, also anonymous, is similarly framed. Willam and Patrick Jones, young sons of an Irish merchant, gather around the tea-table to listen to exploration accounts related by Captain Mackey, a friend of their father's, who was "shut up in Winter Island" with Captain Parry in 1822 (11). Captain Mackey begins his narration with the travels of Samuel Hearne and Alexander Mackenzie, which are followed by details of Franklin's two land expeditions in 1819-1822 and 1825-1827. The text makes no mention of a third Franklin voyage, suggesting that the book was published before 1845, when Franklin departed on his last journey to the Arctic.

The prefaces in both works announce the narrative purpose of educating young (male) minds in religious dogma, manly valour, and useful facts. In *Arctic Travels,* Mr. Jones ensures that, at home, his sons are occupied by activities "which combined instruction with amusement" (5). He encourages Captain Mackey to tell his stories to the boys because of the values conveyed in them:

> They acquired also, in this way, a knowledge of the geography of these hitherto unexplored parts of the earth; while not the least advantage which accrued to them was, the important lesson which the narrative enforced, that zeal, intrepidity, and discretion, can, with the divine aid, surmount the most appalling dangers; while a firm reliance upon the care and protection of an

> ever-watchful Providence, and an unrepining fortitude under the trials which he sends, not only support the mind under suffering, but are often rewarded by the opening of a way of escape, when, to all human appearance, it was hopeless. (6)

The author of *Northern Regions* omits references to divine Providence, but subscribes to the same educational philosophy:

> I trust that my endeavours to combine the useful with the entertaining will not be thrown away, and that my young readers will be impressed with this conviction, that courage, resolution, and perseverance, will support men through toils and dangers, and enable them to act an honourable and useful part in the service of their country.
>
> I have given my narrations in as simple a style as possible, conceiving it better for young people to read the facts and form their own conclusions, than to have an overdrawn picture presented to them, calculated merely for their amusement, and exciting an unhealthy taste for the marvellous and the fictitious. (iii-iv)

Typical of literature for children at the beginning of the nineteenth century, these two works display an insistence on rational discourse and the value of facts about the real world. They marginalize or reject outright the notion promoted by the Romantics in the late 1700s that works of fancy and imagination, such as fairy tales, could have any value whatsoever in the molding of young minds (Zipes, *Victorian Fairy Tales* xiii-xxix). Straightforward, didactic teaching of religion, morality, and proper conduct was believed to instill guiding principles in the child, preparing her or him for success and happiness as an adult, and for life in the hereafter. Fantasy in the form of fiction or imaginative romanticism, serving none of the above purposes, was claimed to confuse the child, who was thought to be unable to distinguish between the fanciful and the real.

Determined to be instructive and factual, the authors of *Arctic Travels* and *Northern Regions* borrowed closely from the journals of returned explorers. Captain Mackey informs his audience that he has read the narratives of Hearne and Mackenzie, offering direct quotations from their journals in response to questions from the two boys. The Captain remains noticeably noncommittal about the territory through which the travellers passed, except where it has a direct bearing on the facts he desires to convey to the children. Franklin's impressions upon reaching the Mackenzie delta are contained in a quotation that is close to the original:[5]

> "The sun was setting," Captain Franklin says, "as the boat touched the beach; but they hastened to the most elevated part of the island, about two hundred and fifty feet high, and never was there a sight more gratifying than that which lay open to their view--a range, called the Rocky Mountains, was seen from S. W. to W. by N.; and, from the latter point around by the north, the sea appeared in all its majesty, free from ice, and without any visible obstruction to its navigation. Many seals and black and white whales were sporting on its waves, and the whole scene was calculated to excite in the mind the most flattering expectations as to the success of the expedition, and that of their friends in the Hecla and Fury, under Capt. Parry." (*Arctic Travels* 129-30)

Captain Mackey limits the description of the surroundings, as Franklin did, so that it refers primarily to the practical goals of exploration. The small hint of emotional response to the "majesty" of the sea is checked by intellectual "excitement" at the thought of navigational, and perhaps commercial, promise contained in the sight. Loomis comments on the "stolid and factual" narratives that were produced by early nineteenth-century British explorers of the Arctic: "Their accounts were usually reasonable and understated, for they were intent on giving rational and scientific descriptions of the Arctic environment, but the effect of their books on the public was quite other than what they intended" (101). He goes on to discuss

Parry's narrative, *Journal of a Voyage for the Discovery of a North-West Passage*, published in 1821:

> Parry's text is also subdued. He devotes many pages to the mundane details of daily life aboard his ships, and when he does describe his surroundings, he indulges in no raptures. Unromantic as Parry's book was in its mode, however, it helped to create a popular image of the Arctic that was very romantic indeed. His very understatement, his calm and logic in describing the prodigies that he had seen, emphasize the strangeness and vastness of the Far North. Even when he comments on the dreariness of the winter landscape, he evokes sublimity. . . .[6] The comfort that Parry took in the presence of other human beings indicates that he was no Romantic searcher after the Sublime, but it also effectively serves to emphasize the mute power and terror latent in that "death-like stillness." (101-20)

In *Northern Regions*, Uncle Richard quotes Parry almost verbatim, inserting himself into the scene to maintain the fictional story line of the work:

> "If we looked towards the sea, one unbroken sheet of ice was before us; if we turned to the land, snow alone presented itself to our view, with here and there a small patch of brown, bare ground. There was something rather melancholy in the scene, when viewed from the summit of the neighbouring hills, on a calm quiet day. Not an object on which the eye could rest with pleasure till it reached our own diminutive colony, where the smoke of several little fires showed the presence of man, and the sound of a few voices, which could be heard at a great distance during the cold weather, broke the death-like stillness which reigned around." (32)

Adhering to Parry's tone and style in describing landscape, Uncle Richard allows occasional hints of gothicism into his narrative. He conjures up a situation of extreme peril

by describing the shifting ice pack threatening to crush the ship: "[O]ur calamities appeared to be hourly multiplying. We passed a fearful night, surrounded by terrors" (20). Yet he does not describe or dwell on the terrors; the danger is passed and the narrative quickly moves on to other matters. Consequently, the underlying sublimity that rests within Parry's text is duplicated in Uncle Richard's story of his own adventures.

These two works aptly illustrate the observation made by Loomis that unembellished facts can leave ample room for imagination to fill in the gaps with romantic renderings of the "strange world in the Far North" (101). Uncle Richard's narrative directly calls on the reader to imagine being there. In describing the total absence of the sun, he states: "'The whole face of nature was indeed completely changed to us, but it was far from being so gloomy as you would imagine'" (33). Captain Mackey's listeners request more information than his tale, faithful as it is to the explorer's rendition, provides. When the Captain lists capital expenditures and returns related to Mackenzie's fur trade objectives, William responds: "'That is very curious. But if Mr. Mackenzie's chief object was trade, what could have brought him to the shores of the Arctic Ocean?'" (32). William is aware that fur-bearing animals are scarce, particularly in winter, in that region, and his question suggests that there could be a more human, psychological motive behind Mackenzie's travels than mere economic concerns. Although the authors of these works adhere to a faithful, though truncated, presentation of the material in their sources, their literary styles combine with the emphasis on heroic human endeavour in the exotic northern setting to undermine their intention to present only facts and exclude the "marvellous." Instead, their writings virtually call out to the imagination to create fictions that might satisfy a desire for romance and excitement.

Like Parry's narrative, these texts undertake to relate the realities of the landscape by emphasizing the extraordinary nature of the arctic environment. The descriptions conjure up fearful, awesome images, which are then contained and tamed by a discourse that demonstrates the success of British incursion into the land. The narratives portray

survival under difficult circumstances, which culminates in a triumphant return home, with scientific data firmly in hand: data that will help to eradicate the mysteries of the strange landscape. This discourse operates to counteract the terrifying aspects of the arctic region by conveying evidence that they can be overcome and conquered by humankind. The sublimity that is evoked, and then subdued, renders a message of confidence in British ability to enter and control the arctic environment.

The narratives of Captain Mackey and Uncle Richard are forerunners of the boy's adventure genre that proliferated from the middle of the nineteenth century until well into the twentieth. In their anthology, *From Instruction to Delight*, Demers and Moyles note the changing nature of materials written for children:

> By the mid-nineteenth century there had appeared several talented writers, working in the same milieu as the Rational Moralists and the Sunday School writers, who began to signal important and long-lasting changes in literature for children. Unlike their doctrinaire contemporaries they were willing to endorse entertainment as a creditable goal in their works for the young, and were capable of fashioning delightful vehicles to ensure success. (219)

Among these writers were the authors of action-packed adventure tales in which youthful heroes in strange and exotic lands performed valorous deeds of the utmost daring. This developing trend in literature for children laid the foundation for a philosophy of writing for young people that still exists today: rather than appearing as unembellished didacticism, instruction can be embedded within imaginative and fantastical tales. As Demers and Moyles observe, the emerging adventure genre consisted of "stories that tasted more of honey than of medicine" (221).

Many of the early adventure writers took their lead from Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, as well as adult sea adventures such as those written by Smollett in the mid-eighteenth century (Green 79). J.R. Wyss produced *Swiss Family Robinson* in 1813, setting his ship-wrecked family on an exotic island to devise ingenious solutions to the problems of

survival. Frederick Marryat was one of the earliest to integrate sea adventure, desert-island setting, and brave exploit with the "piety and didacticism" of the early nineteenth century (Green 80). *Masterman Ready*, the first novel he wrote intentionally for young people, was published in 1841, to be followed by four others, all of which have foreign landscapes in which the protagonists must survive. Later authors, writing in this same vein, reflect the late-century movement away from didacticism by exhibiting a penchant for the excitement of adventure for its own sake. Nevertheless, some, such as Stevenson in *Treasure Island* and Kipling in *Captains Courageous*, retain the valorization of nationalistic and religious ideals found in the narratives of Uncle Richard and Captain Mackey. George Henty must be acknowledged for his contribution in this period. From 1868 until his death in 1902, he produced more than ninety historical adventure stories set in foreign lands, providing exciting reading which, as Green notes, "gave thrills without number" while maintaining "the same over-insistence on manliness, patriotism and 'the stiff upper lip'" (83).

Several authors used the Canadian wilderness as a site for youthful daring deeds and heroic enterprise. Henty, Marryat, and Kipling drew on the strange and fascinating features of southern and eastern Canada to further the plots and action in their works.[7] The exotic, romantic potential of the Canadian north, hinted at in early journals and narratives, was recognized and utilized by others, notably Hampden Burnham, Egerton Ryerson Young, and Robert Michael Ballantyne. The latter three writers, having a close personal alliance with northern Canada, reflect in their works a desire to relate factual details about the land and its people.

A Scotsman by birth, Ballantyne spent six years in the employment of the Hudson's Bay Company, chiefly in the northern regions of the country, beginning his Canadian sojourn at the age of sixteen. His adventure stories set in the arctic wilderness stem from his own youthful viewpoint and experience, and, although not a native Canadian, he projects a determination to depict the land and people of the north in realistic terms as though he had a personal commitment to set the record straight.

Fast in the Ice, issued in 1864, is one of the first of eighteen tales published as *Ballantyne's Miscellany*. An introductory note identifies the author as one of the "Harbingers of the Golden Age," as Demers and Moyles have labelled the adventure writers of the late 1800s (221). In the "Plan of This Miscellany," Ballantyne states:

> Truth is stranger than fiction, but fiction is a valuable assistant in the development of truth. Both, therefore, shall be used in these volumes. Care will be taken to ensure, as far as is possible, that the *facts* stated shall be true, and that the *impressions* given shall be truthful. . . . In writing these volumes, the author has earnestly endeavoured to keep in view the glory of God and the good of man. (vii)

Ballantyne briefly tells his tale and sets his tone within the first few pages of the work. During the early years of exploration in the polar seas, a British ship was frozen in and crushed, forcing the crew to abandon it: "The vessel was lost but her crew were saved, and most of them returned to tell their kinsfolk of the wonders and dangers of the frozen regions, where God has created some of the most beautiful and some of the most awful objects that were ever looked on by the eye of man" (12). Ballantyne places the fictional, heroic figures of Captain Harvey and his nineteen-year-old nephew, Tom Gregory, aboard a ship named the *Hope*, to trace the experiences of early northern explorers. Tom's journals from this voyage form the narrator's "source" for details and factual material. Realistic in tone, the journal "excerpts" remain succinct when landscape is described:

> "I shall never forget the beauty of the scene on our arrival. The sky was lighted up with the most beautiful aurora I have yet seen in these regions. Stars spangled the sky in millions. Great ice-bergs rose in wild confusion in the distance, and all along the shore for a few hundred yards were clusters of snow-huts. They looked exactly like big bee-hives." (95-96)

Tom relates, in detail, the manner in which snow-huts are constructed. His juxtaposition of the domestic image of Inuit homes against a background of icebergs in "wild confusion"

imposes a vision of human capability in an uncontrolled environment. Ballantyne's prose, interspersed between journal entries, emphasizes the physical realities of the environment, but utilizes a convention of the Sublime to focus attention on unusual and fantastic features that can be observed:

> Ice was to be seen all round as far as the eye could reach. Ice in every form and size imaginable. And the wonderful thing about it was that many of the masses resembled the buildings of a city. There were houses, and churches, and monuments, and spires, and ruins. There were also islands and mountains! Some of the pieces were low and flat, no bigger than a boat; others were tall, with jagged tops; some of the fields, as they are called, were a mile or more in extent, and there were a number of bergs, or ice-mountains, higher than the brig's topmasts. These last were almost white, but they had, in many places a greenish-blue colour that was soft and beautiful. The whole scene shone and sparkled so brilliantly in the morning sun, that one could almost fancy it was one of the regions of fairyland! (23–24)

Ballantyne's narrative consists almost entirely of the "strange and interesting events that befell our adventurers" while they waited for the ice to break up (123). The eventual destruction of the ship is relegated to only two pages of text, and, while the demolition presents a fearful sight, it is not allowed to intrude on the positive, exhilarating tone of the journalist who zealously continues to report dates, times, and details of all that befalls him. Thus, Ballantyne allows Tom's "journal" to reflect the contained sublimity found in the narratives of Uncle Richard and Captain Mackey, at the same time drawing attention, through his own interpolations, to the qualities of the Sublime that exist in arctic landscape.

Ballantyne was not, however, content merely to drape instruction to make it more palatable. Less than twenty years after *Fast in the Ice* was published, he wrote *The Giant of the North*, a tale that could label its author an early science fiction writer aligned with

Jules Verne. *The Giant of the North*, issued in 1882, contains numerous tongue-in-cheek pokes of fun at British attitudes regarding the northern landscape and natives which were common at the time of its publication. At the outset of the story, the "Giant" is an Inuit man named Chingatok, "a real man of moderate size--not more than seven feet two in his sealskin boots" (2). He is truly a hero of epic proportions: physically strong and powerful, mentally capable of quick understanding and deep philosophical thought, and supremely unselfish, judicious and wise. The adventure of the tale involves Chingatok's care and guidance of a party of British explorers in their search for the North Pole. Ballantyne lays the foundation for this tall tale in his preface:

> The discovery of the North Pole has been delayed too long.
>
> To settle this question, and relieve men's minds of further anxiety and speculation in regard to the circumjacent regions, I lately sent an old friend on a voyage of discovery to the Arctic regions. My friend, though not a "special correspondent," has been successful. He has discovered the North Pole.
>
> This volume lays the results and romantic details of his expedition before the reader. ([iii])

The "old friend" is Captain Vane, whose ship has been demolished in the ice pack off the north-west coast of Greenland after having passed "all the various 'farthests' of previous explorers" (34). The Captain is also a "Giant," but in a much different mold than Chingatok. His incredible fortitude and indomitable spirit render him the epitome of the "heroes of Arctic story" (34). Underlying the portrayal of Captain Vane is evidence that suggests he is a Don Quixote figure--truly the "Polar knight errant" of Pierre Berton's *The Arctic Grail* (386). The Captain is full of optimistic bombast that rational thought reveals to be riddled with faulty thinking:

> "I'll find it--I'm bound to find it," was the Captain's usual mode of expressing himself to his intimates on the subject, "if there's a North Pole in

> the world at all, and my nephews Leo and Alf will help me. Leo's a doctor, *almost*, and Alf's a scientific Jack-of-all-trades, so we can't fail. I'll take my boy Benjy for the benefit of his health, and see if we don't bring home a chip o' the Pole big enough to set up beside Cleopatra's Needle on the Thames embankment." (33)

Benjy is a fragile boy of twelve, and the nephews are school-boys aged sixteen and eighteen. These three youths, plus an Inuit interpreter from Greenland, and a Black servant, constitute the rather inauspicious party that accompanies Captain Vane on his quest for the North Pole.

Captain Vane concurs with the theory of an open Polar basin of warm water surrounding the Pole (108-10), a notion that was generally held to be disproved by the Nares expedition of 1875-1876, and even earlier by McClure and Collinson (Berton 422, 436). With this concept in mind, the Captain has equipped himself with technical "appliances" which are intended to aid his voyage of discovery (54): dynamite; inflatable rubber boats; a pair of rubber trousers complete with flippers and an inflatable buoy around the waist (which, the author assures in a footnote, has been seen, by himself, in a shop in Edinburgh [264]); and large kites intended to provide motive power for the boats that will take them to the Pole (154).

The Captain is never made openly ridiculous in the narrative, but is eccentric enough to generate wonder among the Inuit on occasion. Chingatok and his people, who are to guide the party, are often amazed at the technology the British possess, but their wonder turns to disbelief, and sometimes pity, regarding these foreigners. An early adventure in the story reveals ineptitude on Leo's part when he forgets to load his rifle, making it necessary for the Inuit to rescue the party from a challenging polar bear. As a result, some of the Inuit are prompted to refuse to go any farther on the journey (80-82). One man explains: "'I will not go with these Kablunets . . . they are only savages. They are not taught. . . . They cannot kill bears; perhaps they cannot kill seals or walruses, and

they ask us to help them to travel--to show them the way! They can do nothing. They must be led like children'" (86).

Presentation of the Inuit view of the British adventurers performs reversals on much of the material contained in journals and narratives circulating in England throughout the nineteenth century. When Chingatok first hears about white men, he decides they may need his help: "'They are pale-faced; perhaps the reason is that they are starved. That must be so, else they would not leave their home. I might bring some of the poor creatures to this happy land of ours, where there is always plenty to eat'" (15). Early journals and arctic narratives frequently refer to the Inuit as "poor creatures," or by means of other similar epithets, generally because they seem, in British eyes, to live a hard existence in a land without amenities, lacking education, religion, all social graces, and even the capacity for advanced intelligence.[8] In this work, the Inuit possess all these characteristics, often to a greater degree than the British.

Landscape plays a significant role in these reversals. The Inuit are educated and knowledgeable about the arctic wilderness, while the British are decidedly lacking in this area. Furthermore, Inuit philosophical concepts of nature are incorporated into the text with a religious connotation. It was a commonly held belief in the nineteenth century, though vigorously debated, that native "heathens" in foreign lands could not be considered part of God's family, or be destined for Heaven, because they had never been introduced to the word of God. Not having access to the Bible, they could have no notion of God, nor any concept of the beliefs and moral teachings of Christianity.[9] Yet, before coming in contact with any White people or European philosophy, Chingatok reflects on the natural world and its manifestation of the power of a supreme Being:

> "Who made me?" he asked in a low tone, when floating alone one day in his kayak, or skin canoe, "whence came I? whither go I? What is this great sea on which I float? that land on which I tread? No sledge, no spear, no kayak, no snow-hut makes itself! Who made all that which I behold?"

> Chingatok looked around him, but no audible answer came from Nature. He looked up, but the glorious sun only dazzled his eyes.
>
> "There *must* be One," he continued in a lower tone, "who made all things; but who made *Him*? No one? It is impossible! The Maker must have ever been. *Ever been*!" He repeated this once or twice with a look of perplexed gravity.
>
> The northern savage had grasped the grand mystery, and, like all true philosophers savage or civilized who have gone before him, relapsed into silence. (7-8)

Thus Ballantyne refutes the notion that the Inuit, or any other untutored "savages," are incapable of an intellectual concept of an entity such as God.

Chingatok's reflections on a "Maker" connected with the landscape are rendered by Ballantyne in a passage that transforms vast, infinite space, which might have been sublime, into a picturesque, neatly framed textual portrait:

> And a magnificent sight presented itself when he took his stand among the glittering pinnacles. Far as the eye could reach, the sea lay stretched in the sunshine, calm as a mill-pond, and sparkling with ice-jewels of every shape and size. An Arctic haze, dry and sunny, seemed to float over all like a golden gauze. Not only was the sun encircled by a beautiful halo, but also by those lovely lights of the Arctic regions known as parhelia, or mock suns. Four of these made no mean display in emulation of their great original. On the horizon, refraction caused the ice-floes and bergs to present endless variety of fantastic forms, and in the immediate foreground--at the giant's feet--tremendous precipices of ice went sheer down into the deep water, while, away to the right, where a bay still retained its winter grasp of an ice-field, could be seen, like white bee-hives, the temporary snow-huts of these wandering Eskimos. (14)

The natural scene Chingatok contemplates is represented with painterly references to foreground, middle distance, and background: the aspects that place boundaries on an image and produce the quality of repose associated with the Picturesque. However, while Chingatok stands to observe the sights before him, the scene erupts:

> Not twenty yards from the point on which he stood, a great ice-cliff--the size of an average house--snapped off with a rending crash, and went thundering down into the deep, which seemed to boil and heave with sentient emotion as it received the mass, and swallowed it in a turmoil indescribable.
>
> Chingatok sprang from his post and sought a safer but not less lofty outlook, while the new-born berg, rising from the sea swayed majestically to and fro in its new-found cradle.
>
> "It is not understandable," muttered the giant as he took up his new position and gazed with feelings of awe upon the grand scene. (14-15)

The apparent repose in the scene is undermined by the latent power to enact a terrific upheaval that, awesome and life-threatening, precludes any suggestion that arctic landscape can be thought of consistently as contained, harmonious, and peaceful. Instead, the site reveals the personified, unknowable terror of the Sublime.

Ballantyne similarly subverts a landscape image that appears to be much like one recorded in Parry's narrative (see Notes 6). Captain Vane and his crew have abandoned their damaged ship and are camped, as "subdued castaways," on the edge of the ice:

> It was a solemn occasion, and a scene of indescribable grandeur, with the almost eternal glacier of Greenland--the great Humboldt glacier--shedding its bergs into the dark blue sea, the waters of which had by that time been partially cleared to the northward. On the left was the weird pack and its thousand grotesque forms, with the wreck in its iron grasp; on the right the

> perpendicular cliffs, and the bright sky over all, with the smoke of the camp-fires rising into it from the foreground. (51)

While Parry indicates that there was nothing in the landscape which could give pleasure to the eye, Ballantyne inserts objects that give unease and displeasure: the "weird" ice pack and sharp cliffs. The major difference between the images of Parry and Ballantyne rests in their representation of the place of human beings in the scene. Parry's textual portrayal functions in the same manner as an early exploration painting by John Webber, an artist who accompanied Cook on his voyage to British Columbia. Maria Tippett and Douglas Cole, in their work, *From Desolation to Splendour*, discuss Webber's watercolour, entitled *Resolution and Discovery in Nootka Sound,* which was painted in 1778:

> Terrifying and desolate in its overpowering presence, the terrain is an inhospitable barrier to man. The ships and sailors, even the natives, are active only on the coastal fringe. The rocks and the forest rear up as walls, overwhelming the fragile human endeavour. The *Resolution* and the *Discovery* anchored in the foreground present themselves as solid, reassuring signs of civilization and calm under the great banner of the British ensign. (18)

Parry renders evidence that Europeans can prevail in the cold, silent Arctic through his reference to British ships and the colony "planted" within the terrain, just as Webber did. Ballantyne's textual picture contains echoes of Parry's, but the effect is just the opposite. The British ship lies wrecked, surrounded by the immense glacier, looming cliffs, and horrific ice pack. Denoting human presence, the small camp-fires are completely overwhelmed by the natural world. Here, human endeavour is deliberately diminished, remaining unrecoverable by any symbol in the landscape.

British endeavour in the Arctic is diminished by the author to an ever-increasing degree as the adventuring party barges and blunders its way toward the Pole. Encountering a solid, impassable chain of icebergs, which prevent access to open water, the Captain,

with elaborate preparations, sets dynamite in an ice cave to blast a way through the barrier (117-20). The pile of ice resulting from the explosion still effectively blocks a passage to the sea; the jubilation of the Captain and his party at the great noise and destruction cannot hide the fact that technology could not, in this instance, aid their quest. Alf devotes one afternoon to producing a sketch of the terrain stretching before him. The narrator reports: "It was truly a clever sketch of a surpassingly lovely scene" (138). The drawing, described in artistic, picturesque terms, is passed to Chingatok for his opinion, which is an exclamation of amazement: "'This is my country made little'" (139). The boys take this as a compliment, proudly handing the picture on to Captain Vane, who queries Alf regarding the extent of the ice pack he has portrayed:

> "D'you mean to tell me, Alf, that you've been true to nature when you sketched that pack?"
>
> "As true as I could make it, uncle."
>
> "I'll answer for its truth," said Leo, "and so will Benjy, for we both saw the view from the top of the island. . . . The pack is even more rugged than he has drawn it, and it extends quite unbroken to the horizon." (139)

Leo inadvertently undermines the veracity of Alf's rendering of the landscape by explaining how the features that were actually present have been contained and tamed. Chingatok's remark, and Leo's failure to portray the physical realities facing the group, constitute a subtle allusion on Ballantyne's part to the illusory nature of much of the material extant in the 1800s which portrayed the Arctic in picturesque and "lovely" terms (MacLaren, *Arctic* 101-02).

Ultimately, *Giant of the North* challenges the notion of the North Pole as a valid object of a glorious quest. Britain's "Arctic Grail," as Pierre Berton has labelled it, is "nothing" in the eyes of Chingatok and the Inuit people who deal with Captain Vane. As the story reaches its climax, it is discovered that these Inuit guides have their home at the site of the Pole. During the journey, the Inuit have attempted to understand the nature of

the "thing" that the Captain desires to find, knowing full well that there is no such "pole" in the land they inhabit. Chingatok grasps the abstract idea that it is not a real thing they seek, and he wonders at people who would go on a quest for "nothing." Yet the wise Inuit understands human nature, as he reveals in a discussion with his mother, Toolooha:

> "Nort [*sic*] Pole!" repeated Toolooha once or twice contemplatively. "Well, he may search for nothing if he will, but that he cannot find."
>
> "Nay, mother," returned the giant with a soft smile, "if he will search for nothing he is sure to find it!" (72)

Chingatok's attempt to explain to his father that the British travellers hunt for something that has a name but does not exist is met by his father's disgust:

> "You have indeed brought to us a set of fools, Chingatok. Your voyage to the far-off lands has not been very successful. These men want something that they do not understand; that they could not see if it was before them; that they cannot describe when they talk about it, and that they could not lay hold of if they had it." (221)

The words of both Chingatok and his father are proven true at the end of the tale, when the British heroes depart with success in their hearts and minds. An old Inuit "wizard" remarks to Chingatok; "They are a strange race. . . . They mingle much folly with their wisdom. They come here to find this Nort Pole, this nothing, and they find it. Then they go away and leave it! What good has it done them?" (431)

The land and sea surrounding the site of the Pole are described with superlatives that extravagantly echo the rhetoric of published arctic narratives, creating in this work a parody of the earlier writings. Once the adventurers have traversed the ancient sea of ice, they enter the open Polar basin, which is variously a "dream" world (167), a "Paradise" (218), and a "new world altogether" (225). The fantastic nature of their situation is evident from the moment they enter the warm sea:

> What added to the romance of the first day's experience was the fact that, a few hours after they started, a dead calm settled down over the sea, which soon became like a great sheet of undulating glass, in which the rich, white clouds, the clear sky, and the boats with their crews, were reflected as in a moving, oily mirror; yet, strange to say, the kites kept steady. . . . Still further to add to the charm, flocks of sea-birds circling in the air or dipping in the water, a berg or two floating in the distance, a porpoise showing its back fin now and then, a seal or a walrus coming up to stare in surprise and going down to meditate, perhaps in wonder, with an occasional puff from a lazy whale,--all this tended to prevent monotony, and gave life to the lovely scene. (166-67)

The lovely scene, however, is disturbed by the onslaught of a fierce squall, which abruptly curtails Benjy's merry enjoyment of the journey. Ballantyne inserts a subtle warning to anyone who would view the arctic environment in a fanciful way: "The poor boy was grave enough now. When the might and majesty of the Creator are manifested in the storm and the raging sea, the merely humorous fancies of man are apt to be held in check" (186).

The islands surrounding the Pole are each paradisal in nature; luxuriantly green, replete with birds and flowers, and peacefully quiet. Leo rises one morning to view "a vision of glorious beauty":

> It was still a profound calm. Earth, air, water, sky, seemed to be uniting in a silent act of adoration to their great Creator, while the myriad creatures therein contained were comparatively quiet in the enjoyment of His rich and varied bounties. . . . The prospect embraced innumerable islands of all sizes, studding like gems the gently-heaving sea. . . . the Arctic world appeared almost overcharged with animal life....To Leo there seemed even a sort of restfulness in the voices of the innumerable wild-fowl. They were so far off, most of them, that the sounds fell on his ear like a gentle plaint,

> and even the thunderous plash of the great Greenland whale was reduced by distance to a ripple like that which fell on the shore at his feet. (327-29)

Having clearly established that the environment in the region of the Pole is a dreamlike fantasyland, Ballantyne tells of the numerous romantic adventures of the British travellers. Intervening in a war between two Inuit tribes, Leo rescues a maiden in distress. Benjy saves himself from a polar bear by inducing the animal to swallow some dynamite, which he then detonates, causing the bear to "burst like an over-charged cannon" (411).

It is on one of these heavenly islands that Captain Vane discovers the North Pole. His scientific observations fix it in a small valley, at the top of a truncated and slightly flattened cone that an old Inuit "wizard" named Makitok uses as a place for meditation (371). Makitok's hut is near-by, on the site where, so the discoverers learn, his forebears established their home several generations earlier. Persistently pursuing Makitok for his family history, Benjy persuades the old Inuit to unwrap an ancestral relic, which is revealed to be a journal written by a Scottish seaman named John MacKintosh, who was cast adrift with Henry Hudson over two hundred years in the past. The sailor had joined a party of Inuit, eventually settled on the island at the North Pole, married an Inuit woman, and established a line of descendants that carried his Inuit name of "Makitok" forward. Ballantyne provides himself with the last laugh in the narrative by designating his own countryman first to the Pole. Furthermore, it is a Scotsman, as Benjy declares the old wizard to be, who regularly situates himself atop the cone, virtually in full possession of the site that has been the ultimate goal of so many adventurers (388-93).

Ballantyne is unrelenting in his parody at the conclusion of the tale. As winter comes to an end, the "gushing advent of spring" transforms the land, which is described in a paroxysm of metaphors of rebirth (422-23). Birds and animals flock to the area and settle down in "garrulous felicity," aptly emulating the style Ballantyne has adopted in this representation of landscape. The British adventurers depart for home after one last dazzling display of dynamite blasts and electric shocks, abandoning the site they have "discovered,"

and bidding farewell to the Inuit who have made that site their home for several generations.

The irony and satire at the heart of *Giant of the North* is directed toward the romanticism in Arctic discourse that emerged in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Loomis notes in his essay that, from 1848, when the British realized that the Franklin expedition was seriously in jeopardy, until 1859, the imagery of arctic landscape grew progressively more sinister (110-11). After 1859, the year that McClintock confirmed the loss of the expedition, along with the death of Franklin in June of 1847, arctic representation lost its sublimity altogether. In its place was a grim, brutal realism that would last until the 1870s, when a new interest arose surrounding the quest for the North Pole. A renewed optimism and enthusiasm for entering and conquering the Arctic was reflected by a revival of sublimity and romanticism in northern landscape imagery. Coincidentally, Ballantyne was still in Canada at the time of Franklin's disappearance; furthermore, McClintock's discovery would place the author in the northern wilderness at the time of Franklin's death. It is not surprising, therefore, that Ballantyne's text rejects the movement toward romanticism, insisting instead on a perspective of arctic wilderness that retains the harsh realities that faced the British public when Franklin's loss was confirmed.

Ballantyne's use of the fantastic to subvert the accepted norm aligns him with other late nineteenth-century writers for children, who were part of the movement to reintroduce fantasy and fairy tales into literary discourse. These authors, according to Jack Zipes, were emulating the German Romantics, "who dissolved reader expectations by transforming familiar topoi and motifs into mysterious, symbolic landscapes which lured readers to question the former secure worlds of conservative fairy tales and the very 'real' world of their immediate surroundings" (*Subversion* 100). Zipes says of George MacDonald and others like him, "it is their intense discontent with domination and the dominant discourse which propelled them to invert and subvert the world with hope in their tales" (101).

Ballantyne's parody of the dominant discourse regarding arctic landscape reveals a similar discontent with his contemporaries' representation of the northern wilderness.

Despite Ballantyne's efforts in *Giant of the North* to dislodge illusion in favor of realism, the exaggerations of the Picturesque and the Sublime continued to appear through the turn of the century. In 1896, Egerton Ryerson Young published *Three Boys in the Wild North Land*, a story in which the majority of the action takes place in the treed interior of the northern wilderness. However, the Arctic is briefly experienced by the three youths as they are introduced into the narrative. The school-boys sail from London aboard a Hudson's Bay Company ship, passing through Davis Strait and across Hudson Bay to York Factory. There they join a brigade of voyageurs to travel inland to the home of Mr. Ross on the banks of the Nelson river, where they remain for a full year. Like Ballantyne, who preceded him, and James Houston, who followed more than sixty years later, Young makes a concerted effort to convey realistic details about the sights and people his heroes encounter. When the boys meet with "Esquimaux" for the first time during a trading stop at the mouth of Hudson Strait, the reader is treated to particulars describing Inuit weapons, trade goods, and hunting techniques (14). Amidst the facts and the hearty, robust tales of hunting exploits, Young inserts landscape descriptions that echo the muted sublimity that Loomis noted in Parry's narrative:

> On the whole they had a glorious passage. Some fogs at times perplexed them, and a few enormous icebergs were so near that careful tacking was required to prevent accidents. The boys were filled with admiration at these great mountains of ice; some of them seemed like great islands, while others more closely resembled glorious cathedrals built in marble and emerald. At times, as the western sun shone upon them, they seemed to take on in parts every color of the rainbow. With intense interest were they watched as they slowly drifted beyond the southern horizon. (13)

Although constrained in tone, this passage emphasizes the wonderfully strange aspects of the environment, which Young continues to focus on throughout the work. Like many writers of narratives about the north, he seizes on the northern lights as prime evidence of sublimity in the landscape:

> Never did they see a glorious display exactly repeated. There was always a kaleidoscopic change; yet each was very suggestive and beautiful. Sometimes they mounted up and up from below the horizon like vast arrays of soldiers, rank following rank in quick succession, arranged in all the gorgeous hues of the rainbow. They advanced, they receded, they fought, they conquered, they retreated, and they faded away into oblivion. Then great arches of purest white spanned the heavens, from which streamers red as blood hung quivering in the sky. Then, after other transformations, a corona filled the zenith and became a perfect crown of dancing, flashing splendor that long hung suspended there above them, a fit diadem, they thought, for the head of Him who was the creator of all these indescribable glories. (142)

While Young gives himself free reign as narrator of this almost surreal portrayal of the northern lights, he reports the reaction of the boys in a much more restrained manner: "These new scenes, both by night and by day, were sources of great pleasure to the boys, as their tastes were fortunately such that these visions had a peculiar charm for them. Then, with their full program of delightful sports, they were indeed having a most joyous holiday" (142). The boys consistently remain grounded in the boisterous, action-filled daily round of adventure in the "wild romantic surroundings" of the Canadian north (70).

E.R. Young, born in Crosby, Upper Canada, in 1840, served as a missionary in the north for eight years. His many works written for young readers display a personal knowledge of the landscapes he uses as settings. Hampden Burnham, another Canadian by birth, introduces the hero of his work, *Jack Ralston: or, The Outbreak of the*

Nauscopees, published in 1903, with an explanation of the seductive allure of the Canadian north. Burnham's depiction of northern wilderness helps to account for the emotional response to landscape that underlies the earlier exploration journals and adventure stories:

> Almost all journeys in arctic regions, where fierce storms and death-dealing blasts are so likely to end the earthly career of the best-prepared of travellers, are fraught with equal interest. The lonely vastness of these illimitable regions; the magnificence of nature in her awful wildness; the glory of the aurora, which cannot even be described to the readers of low latitudes; the sparseness of the population, made up of little communities that barely hold their own with the forces of nature; the size and fierceness of the wild animals that roam over the mighty wastes . . . all give to the portion of the western hemisphere under the Arctic Circle a romantic interest that is exceeded in no other part of the known world. . . . To the bold and daring man, who fears neither nature nor the hostile native, and who glories in his physical strength and fortitude, the north presents a weird and uncontrollable fascination which no other part of the world affords. . . . A country that is bounded on the north and south possesses none of the far-off inaccessible and mysterious places which man's fancy fills with wonders and strange adventures. He longs to reach the "undiscovered country" which has such a charm for the human mind. (9-14)

Burnham's delineation of the "charm" of the northern landscape is laden with the characteristics of the Sublime; yet, where human endeavour is concerned, he controls the images and reduces any latent terror. A youth, with "down on his upper lip" (18), Jack takes up service with the Hudson's Bay Company at Fort Hope, located at the mouth of the Ungava River. The site of the fort forms a picturesque image:

> Fort Hope was situate on a low, undulating shore, backed and flanked by mountainous hills, and with, as we have said, the Ungava River running past it on the west side. The prospect in front is that of a wide and fast-running river, in width a mile and a half. . . . Beyond this expanse of rapidly-running water the landscape is composed of an endless succession of mountains, forming, with the river, a picturesque and striking scene. Immediately behind the fort the hills are precipitous and jagged, and to a large extent covered by a low brush and the well-known arctic moss. In certain lights and at particular seasons the variety and beauty of the colouring on the mountain-sides is enchanting, and Jack felt that the beauty of the region quite made up for its remoteness from civilization. (27)

Born in Peterborough, Canada West, in 1860, Burnham exhibits in his text a concern similar to that found in Young's work: that the Canadian North should be understood for what it really is. Like Ballantyne, Young and Burnham had a long residency within the landscapes they drew upon for their descriptive material. Burnham, a lawyer and politician as well as an author, travelled extensively in the North in connection with his duties as a government representative. Yet, in spite of their direct experience, and their concern for realism, the latter two authors utilized the conventional literary discourse of the Picturesque and Sublime which remained in standard use at the time they produced their works. Their rhetoric results in an exaggerated representation of the characteristics of the landscape. The adventure genre relies on exotic features of landscape for the sake of the novelty they provide, and for the opportunities they offer heroes to display extraordinary bravery. The adventure discourse, which openly invokes the Sublime while at the same time rendering the environment picturesque, complements the conquering actions of the heroes by reducing the landscape to a contained, tamed space suitable for human habitation. While Ballantyne, Burnham, and Young were able to break away from the earlier didacticism, adopting in its place the imaginative style of adventure stories which

had become standardized by the last decade of the nineteenth century, only one of the three--Ballantyne--appears to have recognized the illusory nature of the customary mode of landscape description. According to Tippett and Cole, literary representation of wilderness in the late 1800s adopted a form which, striving for dramatic effect, resulted in contrived and clichéd figures of speech: "Mountains became the subject of conventionalized emotion and romantic exaggeration. No one in the Victorian era could write of mountains without resorting to rhetorical bombast. A sense of genuine awe dissolved into a feigned sensationalism" (32). Ballantyne's use of fantasy and satire in *Giant of the North* provides a corrective discourse for the conventionalized representation of the arctic environment; his text is a "radical mirror," according to Zipes's definition, that reflects what is wrong with the dominant discourse (*Subversion* 99). He disallows romanticised "loveliness" and exaggerated sublimity, insisting, instead, that arctic landscape be recognized for the power it holds over human beings. The patterns of his corrective discourse, however, remained virtually ignored until the middle of the twentieth century, when they emerged in the works of Houston and his contemporaries, as well as in narratives of Inuit authorship.

CHAPTER III

EARLY TWENTIETH-CENTURY FICTION

A. THE DOMESTICATED ARCTIC

Factual information and realism dominate the narrative projects of authors writing fiction for children during the early and middle decades of the 1900s. Loomis states that, by the beginning of the twentieth century, extensive exploration of northern regions had eroded the imaginative and sublime vision of the Arctic (112). Through mapping, naming, and scientifically studying the landscape, human endeavour appeared to master and domesticate the North. As a result, narrative conventions of earlier textual discourse, characterized by rhetoric that glorified the awe-inspiring and often terrifying unknown, became "self-consciously fictive," virtually disappearing from all but poetical and fictional genres. "The mystery was gone in fact if not in fiction," Loomis declares; "The Sublime cannot be mapped." This trend to domesticate the northern landscape extends to fictional works for children, expelling mystery from the land, and inserting, in its place, mastery over the land.

The authorial approach most frequently discerned is one which focuses primarily on the manner by which the arctic environment is inhabited and managed. Human competence and knowledge serve to provide a genial mode of living that imbues the stories with a benign sense of the land. Happy youths are portrayed adventuring through the landscape in reasonable comfort and safety, their crises and difficulties resolved with ease and dispatch. One such narrative is *Kak, the Copper Eskimo*, by Vilhjalmur Stefansson and Violet Irwin. First published in 1924, the work stands as a companion piece to Stefansson's documentary works, *The Friendly Arctic* and *The Friendly North*, published in 1921 and 1930 respectively. Collectively, these three texts illustrate that the northern environment is well able to support and nurture human life.

The text of *Kak* incorporates elements of the standard narrative structures of adventure tales, yet helps to define the new dominant discourse evolving from the pragmatic realism imposed by exploration. Kak, an Inuit boy who is the protagonist in the story, is portrayed as a boisterous, egotistical scamp whom Egoff and Saltman label "a happy-go-lucky Tom Sawyer of the North" (28). Reminiscent of Thomas Hughes's *Tom Brown's Schooldays*, Kak's language, and that of the narrator, adopt a jolly, British school-boy idiom which the author claims in the preface is necessary to convey the intended representation of the boy and his activities. Kak envisions himself an heroic adventurer, his enthusiasm for attempting daring feats inflated by his emotional response to the landscape:

> Wow! What a cold gray landscape! The whole world lay flat about him, empty of forms or motion; while above in the sky dome, which looked very much like their roof on a huge scale, instead of shadows the gayly colored northern lights danced and dissolved.
>
> Kak's spirits shot up like a rocket.
>
> "Hurrah!" he yelled. . . .
>
> The beauty of the Arctic dawn was wonderful and had to be expressed. Out there in the open he felt he could achieve. And this was going to be a gorgeous day, a marvelous chance for doing things--but what things? (36-37)

Images of desolation and infinity, which in the former discourse signified sublimity, here are inspirational only insofar as they compel Kak to "go a-hunting all day by himself," to see if he can catch a seal and prove himself a hero.

Additional evidence is available that sublimity has deliberately been excluded from description of land in this text. A terrifying natural phenomenon is specifically portrayed for its fearful qualities, then reduced to a trivial occurrence, understandable and something less than marvelous:

> A long drawn thunder, followed by a tumbling, rending, grinding vibration roused Kak from his dreams. . . . Another rumble, more prolonged, more terrifying than the last, shook the whole house. . . . The row outside was no more alarming to him than taxicabs beneath your window, or a trolley car clanging across rails, for well he knew its meaning; a gale had driven the sea ice in on the landfast ice, and the two floes were grinding and groaning and churning against each other, with bolts of thunder when sometimes a great mass as big as a house toppled over another great mass, and vibration like an earthquake as it slid off again. This sort of show was fun to watch in the daytime, and nothing to be afraid of at night. . . . (24-25)

Awesomeness and mystery are transformed and eliminated through explanation, through equanimity on the part of Kak, and by a direct address to the reader. Kak and his environment are rendered like "you" and "your" home, reducing difference to mere fascinating detail. The narrator assures the reader that even aspects of the environment hidden from view can be explained, as the introduction to Kak's seal-hunting exploit illustrates: "So that you can thoroughly understand Kak's predicament later, I want to explain what was going on below the ice as well as what happened above" (38).

The new arctic discourse of the early twentieth century seeks to explain and reconcile difference with regard to both human beings and landscape. Just as Ballantyne did in *Giant of the North,* Stefansson and Irwin depict the Inuit as intelligent and knowledgeable people, able to read and interpret signs in the land, clever at inventing the means to accomplish a goal. Kak's father demonstrates his ingenuity by improvising a sled runner made from animal skin, lacking the wood to replace a broken piece (103).

The text purposefully informs its readers, through direct statements and illustrative detail, that the Arctic is a nourishing, alluring site for human habitation. Introductory passages imply that Kak and his family live a carefree life devoid of hardship:

> He found plenty of sport up there in the Arctic to keep him merry and bright. First of all his parents owned so little they were never worried about taking care of things; with nothing to do but kill a few animals for food and fuel and clothes they were as gay as children, always laughing and joking from morning to night. (4)

The few occasions where difficulties arise are reduced to the status of a "jolly" adventure. In travelling to the land of trees, Kak and his family must cross a treacherous piece of ice, and the danger is clear: "That swiftly racing, cruel tide below would carry a man like a chip, and whirl him instantly, with his first cry on his lips , to the black doom of the airless ocean under the ice" (127). Their crossing is nearly disastrous when the ice cracks, but is made less horrendous by comic relief afforded by the fussy, foolish actions of Okak, a neighbor who has accompanied them on the journey. After further travel over inhospitable terrain, the group remains comfortable and undaunted in spirit: "considering they were, in a sense, ship-wrecked on a barren spot where none of them had the least desire to linger, they made a wonderfully jolly camping party of it" (157).

Although Kak and his family experience hunger while crossing the inland plains, the land provides an abundance of food. Unfamiliar with the territory, the Inuit cache their extra meat, leaving it behind in anticipation of a plentiful supply of fresh game ahead. When the hunt fails them they are forced to subsist on small animals, failing to recognize the berries proliferating underfoot as a source of nutrition (166-71). Large animals suitable as food are not absent in the land, however; they are only difficult to find, as Taptuna, Kak's father, discovers: "We learn now this country is tricky" (166). Later in the story a massive herd of caribou, passing through the area where the Inuit are encamped, provides proof that the land abounds in natural resources for survival. The narrator emphasizes this abundance through the reaction of the White explorer, Omialik, who has joined the Inuit party:

> The white man could not bear to tear himself away. This was the grandest exhibition of the riches of the north he had ever seen. He wanted to look and look, convincing himself of its reality, so that when he returned to his own country and people talked about "those cold waste regions," and "the barren Arctic," he could remember this and say: "You are all wrong. Hundreds of thousands of animals roam over that so-called desert. . . . " (223)

Omialik's thoughts reflect the narrative purpose of reconciliation to difference which lies at the heart of the work. Just as the use of "you" pulls the reader into the text to encourage understanding, the White man's direct experience and observation offer a reliable eye-witness report to both his future audience in "his own country," and the implied reader to whom this region is a strange, unknown place.

Kak's final heroic adventure in the narrative involves the latent, surprising danger that can rest hidden in the land. He falls through a crevasse, into a strange, confusing ice tunnel where he confronts and kills a wolf. Then, using his own ingenuity and skill, he devises a way to rescue himself. The narrator explains that the ice configuration that constituted Kak's prison is unusual for the area, commonly found only in the Antarctic (253). Thus the Arctic is shown to produce singular phenomena that are unpredictable and menacing. Nevertheless, Kak demonstrates that determination and resourcefulness can succeed in preserving life even when the land reveals surprising peril.

The conclusion of the text retains the same happy, comfortable tone of the opening chapter: "Their summer trip had prospered through strenuous labor and thrilling feats, and they all looked forward to their winter on the ice as a well-earned holiday" (253). The narrative has transformed the old dominant discourse regarding the Arctic from one of mystery and Sublimity, to a new one of land management and expertise that ensures survival. According to Stefansson and Irwin, there are in this land no unknown or magical powers that cannot be managed successfully. In fact, it is the human element that is

empowered with shamanistic "magic" over the land. The White man, Omialik, is considered by the Inuit to be " a shaman with a powerful magic that could kill a bear by pointing at it" (102). The source of his "magic" is his rifle, which is an object of fascination and envy for Kak. The boy, whose greatest fear is the polar bear, has quickly comprehended the enormous advantage of a rifle in eliminating the necessity of fighting a bear at close quarters. Of course, his greatest wish is that "he could be a shaman and have a powerful magic that would kill wild animals before they appeared," but he would settle for a rifle of his own for the safety it could provide him (83-84). Kak's desire is security, accompanied by a greater degree of control in managing the natural world: "'When I have a rifle and a fish-net and learn all kinds of things there are to eat I'll never be hungry, I expect'" (174). While the majority of the Inuit people refer to the rifle as "powerful magic," Kak and his father, who have a clear understanding of the functions of the device, demonstrate that there is nothing very mysterious about it (103).

Although the evolving discourse predominantly excludes mystery from the land, it retains for a time some relics from the preceding literary era that support the notion of White, or European, superiority over both the environment and the natives of the arctic regions. The only "shaman" in *Kak* is Omialik, the White man who introduces the Inuit to the "magic" of a rifle. Omialik has another kind of "magic," which Kak attributes to his "big heart" (190). The Inuit boy idolizes the White man for his assurance and success in moving through the wilderness. In Kak's mind, Omialik is raised to the status of a hero, whereby the narrator extrapolates heroic stature to White men in general: "'Omialik is so kind his heart must be big also,' the lad mused, never guessing how his thought impinged on the secret of the other's power, for together great hearts and great brains master their world" (190-91). In this text, the Inuit demonstrate a certain mastery over their native landscape, yet the White entry into the region is heralded as the coming of a more powerful force that can exert a greater degree of domination over the environment.

As the twentieth century progressed, White presence in the North became a dominant characteristic of children's literature set in arctic regions. Stories of two types predominate. Those which focus on a White child as the main character tend to relate how Whites have successfully learned to manage the arctic landscape, bringing advantages to the Inuit through technology, medicine, education, law and order, and Christian teaching. Stories that have an Inuit child as the protagonist continue the discourse of *Kak* by explaining the Inuit way of life, with references to the impacts, negative and positive, White presence has had on that mode of living.

In 1952, William G. Crisp published *Ook-Pik: The Story of an Eskimo Boy*. In it, he describes the life of a twelve-year-old Inuit lad whose people inhabit the dwarf-willow country. The details of Ook-pik's dangerous but exciting trip with an officer of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police constitute the primary event in the story. The text introduces White presence with a note of misgiving when Ook-pik's grandfather voices his dislike for the guns, airplanes, and boats with engines that are being brought into the country. "'These things are a very dangerous kind of magic,'" he declares, for they will frighten the caribou and seals from the land (47-48). Yet the narrative relates how, from the Inuit perspective, White men, though strange in some ways, are "not . . . very different from us" in others (91). Some of their goods, notably metal needles and fox traps, are advantageous to Inuit life. The narrator says of the Inuit: "Now changes were coming to their land. Whether they were for better or for worse no man could say" (92). Doubt regarding the beneficial nature of White incursion into the country is allayed in Ook-pik's dealings with White culture. Members of the police force are portrayed as a fine group of men who can teach the Inuit lessons of practical and moral value. Ben, the officer whom Ook-pik accompanies on the trip, introduces the boy to the benefits of washing in soap and water (118). In response to Ook-pik's enthusiasm for shooting game, Ben instructs the Inuit youth that killing more meat than one can consume is not the correct manner with which one should treat the natural world (122). When the two eventually arrive at the

settlement, Ook-pik is awed and delightfully amazed at the powers White technology has over the land. The airplane that delivers him back to his home reduces the distances between his familiar landmarks, resulting in a new perspective for him regarding his homeland. In his mind his home territory is smaller than it was, contained within the larger boundaries he has both seen on a map and experienced in person.

Ook-pik's diminished vision of landscape at the conclusion of the story is foreshadowed in the opening sections of the work. At the outset, diminutive terms are used to describe the arctic site: a "light wind" was blowing, the air was full of "tiny flakes" of snow, and the wind "swept the fine snow along the ground, filling in the little hollows between the dwarf willows" (10). The land is objectively presented with very little emotion or hint of the Sublime which characterized nineteenth-century narratives. Ook-pik's country is one of rolling hills, where bare, rocky hill-tops interrupt expanses of "pure white" snow. Nearly devoid of any sign of life, the expanse is enlivened by a single raven that glides slowly and lazily across the scene, signaling comfort and peace rather than sublime, empty vastness or menace (28-29). Reduced to a site of mere physical phenomena, in which the northern lights, and the annual last glimpse of the sun, are dismissed with a brief reference, the environment is objectified and documented. The inhabitants manage its characteristics so as to minimize danger and maintain a comfortable existence.

Crisp has written magic into the text of *Ook-Pik* in a manner that echoes Stefansson and Irwin's treatment of the rifle. The objects having magical aspects belong to White culture, which is just in the process of becoming known to the Inuit. A telescope fascinates Ook-pik and his friends, who discuss its properties and conclude that it is not magical (89). Other items of White technology, such as the wireless (142) and the airplane (145), receive the same treatment. They are depicted as unfamiliar tools which the White men use to help them manage in the arctic landscape, but the magical characteristics are explained away. So, too, are Inuit magical powers dismissed. While an old "witch-doctor" demonstrates

his ability to foretell the future (98), Ook-pik, in his contemplation of the workings of the wireless, casts doubt on the powers of Inuit "magicians": "'Of course I have heard how our own witch-doctors have talked with people in far countries, but they are all grey-headed old men, they never say that a strange bird, or anything else for that matter, will arrive at a definite time'" (144). Crisp conclusively illustrates human control over the environment, predominantly through the powers technology affords. Neither humans nor landscape incorporate magical or mysterious forces that affect survival.

Lillian Murray, in *In the Track of the Huskies*, treats the arctic landscape in a manner that is similar to Crisp's. Published in 1960, this story is, in many ways, a feminine variation on the earlier "boy's adventure" genre. The British heroine, Ginnie, is a sixteen-year-old who has accompanied her father, Dr. Nixon, to an arctic trading settlement. The text amounts to a testament for the benefits that White culture, comprising medicine, religion, law, and material goods, can deliver to the inhabitants of the land. Inuit land spirits are clearly overshadowed and made ineffectual by the dominant White discourse in the narrative. There are echoes here of the nineteenth-century view of the Inuit as "poor creatures," deprived of all that is good in European civilization, accompanied by the tenor of adventure tales that depicts confident and enthusiastic mastery of a foreign land by the British adventurer.

Ginnie devotes her time to teaching the Inuit children about the "Great White Queen" and the "strange land across the sea" (14-16). In addition, she owns her own husky team which she has learned to drive with expertise across the tundra. Her mastery of the land, as well as mastery of the Inuit language and grasp of Inuit customs, allows her to become an idol in the eyes of the natives at the settlement. Thus the narrator privileges Ginnie and her British culture over the arctic landscape and its indigenous inhabitants.

Ginnie's adventures involve Kivgalo, a "bad shaman," and his efforts to assert control over his people. At issue is the question of his power over disease as compared to the "magic" represented by the injection needles of the White doctor and Nurse Wilson.

Ginnie helps to rescue several Mounties whom Kivgalo traps in a cave, saves Nurse Wilson from Kivgalo's tortures, and rescues a group of Inuit children from a building set on fire by the vicious shaman and his men.

Inuit beliefs in spirits and shamanism are addressed continually throughout the narrative, invariably in a manner that reduces them in significance. In a patronizing manner, the text reports that Ginnie hugged the children affectionately when they reported evil spirits influencing their play (13). In a similar tone, the narrator describes Ginnie's participation in a meal: "Out of respect to Eskimo custom, they poured three tiny drops of the steaming liquid on the snow floor of the igloo, to cajole the spirit of the bear and let it rest peacefully. The Eskimos did likewise before putting the stew to their lips" (118). The narrator is genuinely respectful of Inuit spiritual beliefs, for Ginnie is shown to acknowledge that life is full of hardships for these people (132). She demonstrates an awareness that their charms enable them to confront the "evil spirits" in the land that are believed to be responsible for the starvation and danger they face (116). Given a new fur parka decked with charms as she is about to set off on one of her rescuing adventures, Ginnie is grateful and admiring of the gift; yet, out on the trail, her "silent prayer" for success in her mission signals the narrator's view that Christian faith has a power here that the charms do not have (68).

Inuit belief in spirits is reduced to mere superstition by Ginnie while she is investigating strange sounds in a derelict ship which the Inuit believe to be haunted. She finds herself caught between knowing there are no such things as ghosts, and fearing that something inhuman may be lurking in the ship: "'There's something behind that door! Something moved. Yukapuk knows it too! Perhaps if I open it, something will jump out at me. A wolf, maybe, or something more horrible. These Eskimoes [*sic*] and their superstitions. I wish I had never listened to them'" (74). Ginnie negates the suggestion of magic by suppressing her fears and opening the door, behind which she discovers her friend, Paul, who had been kidnapped by Kivgalo. Ginnie's inner strength in overcoming

these magical elements supports the heroic qualities which have been invested in her character as a White adventurer in this foreign land.

Throughout Murray's narrative, landscape is represented merely as back-drop for the plot. Ginnie drives her dogs over a dangerous patch of thin spring ice in an exhilarating dash to beat the arrival of Kivgalo at an Inuit camp, the event emphasizing Ginnie's daring and prowess rather than any latent power in the landscape. Romanticism tinges Ginnie's perception of the land in just one passage in the text:

> Comfortably muffled in furs, Ginnie thought back to the time two years before, when she had experienced her first ride on a dog sledge. The wonder and grandeur of the Arctic landscape had thrilled her then and she still loved it. But now, after two years, a deeper feeling possessed her, a great love and admiration for the Eskimo people and the northland, and a thankfulness that she was part of it. (33-34)

This White, emotional bond with landscape is significantly different from the Inuit perception of the land embedded within a legend related by the "good shaman," Orlak. He tells a story of magic, about a hunter and a beautiful girl who is changed into a seal by a dwarf living under the ice. The setting of the story is forbidding:

> As he rode alone, he stared out across the frozen sea. It lay silent and brooding under the fierce grip of the ice. Avranna and his people had watched its struggle at the beginning of every winter. In rage and fury, the angry waves would toss the thin, new ice up on the shore, stealing for a time a few more days of freedom. Then the wind would die down, the waves would be no more, and the ice would steal back again leaving its silvery streaks over the still waters. As the weather grew colder, the ice would become thicker and the mighty sea would once again have lost the battle, yielding to its imprisonment. (135)

This passage is remarkable within this text, for it contains the only personification of the environment found in the narrative, and is, in fact, the only lengthy description of landscape. It suggests a sincere effort on the part of the author to insert an authentic Inuit representation into the narrative. Supporting this effort, but negating any mystery, is the inclusion of black-and-white photographs, acquired from the National Film Board of Canada, that depict Inuit activities.

Murray has actively engaged in nullifying the magic in the landscape that is suggested by the Inuit beliefs in spirits that control the environment. Ginnie's heroic deeds represent White objectification and domestication of a region that Europeans formerly imagined as unknown and mysterious. Therefore, the author's relentless realism exemplifies an approach which remains part of the dominant discourse in children's literature throughout the years ranging from 1920 into the 1960s. Although the next chapter will illustrate a significant change in the second half of the twentieth century, it is worth noting that some authors retained the earlier treatment of the subject.

Anna E. Rokeby-Thomas's contribution to this genre is a female coming-of-age narrative which elucidates to a large extent the realities of the Inuit way of life. *Ningiyuk's Igloo World*, published by the Moody Bible Institute of Chicago in 1972, was written from the author's experiences among the Ekaluktuk tribe near St. George's Mission on Victoria Island, where her husband was posted as pastor for the Anglican Church of Canada. While her story contains clear messages reflecting missionary objectives, the integrity of the author in her realistic representation of Inuit culture is noteworthy; the treatment is more explanatory than evaluative. At the back of the book a glossary of Inuit words with English translations hints that the author has undertaken to explain how life goes on in the Arctic.

Rokeby-Thomas's work combines several characteristics that have been discussed thus far. As in *Kak*, her Inuit characters live a relatively carefree existence, although survival requires a certain amount of labour. The beneficial nature of White culture, which,

in *Ook-Pik*, is represented by technology, appears in Rokeby-Thomas's work through the introduction of Christian theology to the Inuit. While Lillian Murray merely overlays the Inuit beliefs with a superior Christianity, leaving in place an active faith in land spirits, Rokeby-Thomas's narrative incorporates a vigorous project of conversion that dispels the notion of multiple spirits.

Ningiyuk's Igloo World revolves around identity and belonging. It focuses on Ningiyuk, a ten-year-old Inuit girl who is told by her brother that she is adopted. Later, her parents explain that she was born to people belonging to a tribe far to the west who were travelling in her parents' district at the time of her birth. Ningiyuk fixes in her mind a vision in which she longs for her "real" mother who is beautiful and lives a life of comfort and plenty in a house like the White man's, as the Inuit tribes to the west are believed to do (18-19). However, she is required by her parents to put these thoughts aside and never speak of them, and the story proceeds to recount a one-year cycle in the life of the family.

The land and its elements stand at the heart of each event in this record of a year in Ningiyuk's life. Most noticeable is the child's enthusiastic, exhilarated response to the natural environment:

> Instead of resting, she roamed over the hills to feel and see the wonder of springtime. Water gurgled around the brown rocks in the streams and young Arctic hares leaped out from nowhere. Flocks of birds appeared in the sky and there was music in the air. And the sun! It never seemed to get weary anymore. (68-69)

Ningiyuk's response to the land is a romantic one in which she exults. The textual representation of landscape is lyrical, yet much information and detail are packed into the narrative to describe how the land provides sustenance for the Inuit through their own hard work and conformation to the ways of nature. Home is never one geographical spot, but wherever the family locates itself to take advantage of the best chances for food and survival:

> "But sometimes I wish we could stay in one place, like the White people do."
>
> "You silly child!" Komoyiok [Ningiyuk's father] was listening. He couldn't visualize such an existence. "We must follow the ways of our ancestors, for they were wise. In the springtime we naturally move out to the sea ice just as it begins to break up. The seals are in abundance, and we build storage places filled with precious meat. But when winter comes, our people must be near the river mouths. They are filled with fish for a short time. We need to be there to get a good supply." (40)

The Inuit rely on the land and make use of it, but it is also noteworthy that they are at its mercy, compelled to adjust to nature's ways in order to survive.

Romantic elements in the text notwithstanding, on limited occasions the land is shown to have its dark side. When the sun has disappeared for several months, the people evince sadness and are reduced to silence (28, 30). Ningiyuk's reaction is more extreme: "Ningiyuk was weeping. The darkness folded over her like a black fishnet. It weighed her down so, her feet dragged as she headed back home" (30). Here the landscape imposes a feeling of enclosure and entrapment. Later in the story, the mental state brought on by winter is a sort of lassitude: "But with the Christmas festivities over, the days seemed longer and colder than ever. The winter drowsiness came over the grown-ups and they scarcely left their sleeping bags. It was hard to speak without yawning" (50).

Ningiyuk's view of the landscape and her introspective relation to it is marked by her perception of her own place within it. When her brother tells her of her adoption, her perception of the land undergoes an abrupt change:

> But Ningiyuk didn't hear a word that he was saying. She didn't even notice when he finally left her alone. What she did know was that the beautiful white world she gaily had raced into had suddenly changed. It looked black and horrid now, and seemed to be crumbling all around her. Her friend, the

> sun, had dropped out of sight, and a frightening black cloud filled the sky. (13)

A landscape analogy is used to describe her new, troubled state of mind: "Like the wind in a blizzard, her thoughts kept changing about the secrets of her past. Why did my parents give me away? was always the last question on her mind before falling asleep" (32). Feeling cold, lost or rejected, and subject to the menacing whim of unpredictable and uncontrollable forces undergird this simile. A hint of gothic horror also appears: "But the snow wall she faced wasn't friendly. Tonight she could see no fairies dancing as the light flickered on the frosty surface. They had become frightened animals in a storm" (16-17). During the story this menace from the land shifts back and forth, from physical reality to Ningiyuk's perception of it, based on an inner state of mind. At one point Ningiyuk becomes lost out on the tundra. She has given in to "the lure of the midnight sun" and allowed her romantic exuberance to lead her away from the village. Realization that she is lost brings about a reversal in perception: "Shivers ran up and down the child's spine. In every direction, as far as she could see, the tundra was strange and unfriendly" (78). Being physically lost mirrors Ningiyuk's mental response to learning of her adoption. In both cases, what she thought of as "home," secure and benevolent, suddenly became the reverse, and both episodes are recorded in similar terms of menace.

Gothic terror is similarly but more emphatically evoked when Ningiyuk experiences an actual blizzard as she and her mother and grandmother are left alone in the igloo:

> But whether they were awake or asleep, the storm was a thing of terror to them. It whirled and whined outside the snow wall. And its terror seemed to have the strange power of reaching inside the igloo! Behind every object there lurked black shadows that looked like wild animals. Every time the seal oil lamp spluttered, the fearsome shadows leaped upwards, as if to attack. Outside the whine of the wind was weird and strange. (35)

In this instance the menace is real, as it conceivably was for a child lost alone on the land. The storm has the capability of blowing in the walls of the igloo, and freezing or starving the women. The threatening animals are an imaginative animation of menace.

In spite of Ningiyuk's perpetual ecstatic response to the land, she has the tribal knowledge of the extent to which the Inuit as a culture have been vulnerable to the vagaries of nature. Early in the story her grandmother relates events of the time when the ancestors first entered the land:

> "Without a tree in sight, they wondered how they could exist. Wild animals threatened their lives, and starvation was a constant fear. Instead of their land of dreams, they found themselves on a frozen desert. . . . But just as they were getting used to a new way of life, a sad thing happened to them. . . . It was worse than their hunger pains, and even the howling of the wolverine was as nothing in comparison. . . . It was the strange action of the sun. . . . There was terror on their faces as they watched it rise later each day and go to bed earlier each night. . . . They offered every known sacrifice to please the spirits. But the angry darkness hung over them like an evil omen. . . . They had lived in darkness for almost three months, and life had become unbearable. They thought they would rather face death than go on living without the sun." (20-23)

The tale relates how the people have learned to exist in this "frozen desert," and how experience and knowledge have decreased or eliminated the fears and many of the dangers. The author's explanatory approach to depicting how the Inuit manage to survive in the arctic landscape links her to Murray and other authors of the early twentieth century who were intent on a realistic portrayal of landscape and its effect on human inhabitants.

Rokeby-Thomas's narrative does not allow the impression of threat and danger to intrude on the romantic loveliness of the land, or to disrupt the thematic focus on the northern landscape as a site where life is nurtured. The blizzard marks a brief episode that

ends happily with the return of the hunters with food. In addition, one of the dogs has produced pups during the storm, the births symbolizing survival. Grandmother Itow revisions the interior of the igloo for Ningiyuk so that it represents the interconnection of humans and the natural world. The snow blocks overhead, which, when new, "sparkled like a million stars," represent the sky. The earth is designated by the raised sleeping platform, below which is a pile of frozen fish and seal meat signifying the sea. Fox pelts and caribou legs are the wild life upon which the Inuit depend for food and clothing. "'It *is* a little igloo world,'" Ningiyuk exclaims (28). In effect, Itow has shown that the home of the Inuit is a microcosm of the landscape; both the igloo and the land represent the source of sustenance and the means of survival of the Inuit people.

Landscape provides the author with an opportunity to deal with the spirituality of the Inuit, and to create a relation between it and Christian philosophy. The sun is the crux on which this relationship operates. Solar action regulates the life cycle on the land and thus controls human activities of survival. Ningiyuk's response to the landscape is consistently tied to the sun. She thrills to sunsets and feels "the lure of the midnight sun" out on the tundra (77). Indeed, the sun has a sublime effect on all the village people:

> Never had the newborn sun looked so good to them. It brought back life to their sleepy world. Rosy and bright, it looked down on the snows, and sunbeams reached out to tint the world with a soft pink glow. In the twinkling of an eye the sun turned to pale purple. Even the people took on a lavender color. As the Eskimos watched in awe, the crystals in the snow suddenly glittered like gold. (53)

Okio accuses his sister of sun worship, which is evil according to the Christian teaching that the children and their parents have accepted (11). Ningiyuk denies the "worship" aspect of the accusation, staunchly defending her regard for the sun as a "friend" that "sends out happiness" (11).

Because Grandmother Itow has not accepted the Christian message, her spiritual concept of the sun resembles her ancestors'. She admonishes the children with a warning: "'The sun spirits must never be offended. The sun holds a strange power. It is stronger than the mightiest hunter'" (25). Itow's beliefs consist in a notion of mysterious forces, or spirits, that cannot be known, but are evidenced in the phenomena of the land, which symbolize the mood or attitude of these spirits. Within this concept, certain actions are taken in an attempt to influence the attitude of the spirits, and, thereby, to survive. The spirits control the environment and thus are the arbiters of life and death. Heeding the signals, seeking understanding, and undertaking acts of propitiation constitute ways to gain some control over the chances for survival. Itow plans to sew tails to Ningiyuk's coat to protect her from "the evil spirits" (59).

Rokeby-Thomas settles on a subtle way to allow these ancestral beliefs to rest within a Christian message, while at the same time making the Christian philosophy predominate. The northern lights, described with a rhetorical style laced with the sublime, symbolize both philosophies:

> Dreamily, [Itow] told them stories of the northern lights. They stood speechless, for in some strange way she made them feel there was a mystery attached to the heavenly colors.
>
> "Pay attention to them," she gave warning, "for they are full of messages." (51)

As the northern lights dance overhead, the children respond emotionally to the scene:

> Then one delicate curtain of light separated from the others. It floated down and dipped low, almost to the earth. Okio reached out as if to touch the light. It was playful and teasingly tumbled far out of his reach. Then, on invisible wings, it went back to the heavens.
>
> Together the children stood spellbound. Finally the lights began to fade.

"The Great Spirit was there," Ningiyuk whispered. (51-52)

The nature of this event, while retaining all its mystery and animistic import, has undergone a transformation. Initially the lights indicated the presence of many spirits, but in the end are given the characteristics and appeal of the Christian "Great Spirit," or "One God." Similarly, the symbols of landscape that signify "many spirits" to the grandmother are made over as multiple signs of the one Great Spirit after her conversion to Christianity. As she expresses in her song, the sun is now a part of the greater "Spirit of spirits," and this one Spirit both encompasses her universe and dwells within the physical aspects of the earth and sea (67). Itow acknowledges that there is something more powerful than the "sun spirits" (66), just as Ningiyuk's mother did at the Easter service when she explained: "The sun seems weak in comparison" (61).

With her Christian conversion, Grandmother Itow renounces the fears that are here associated with the necessity to guard against and propitiate evil spirits. The Christian message promotes the concept that physical things of the landscape evince a loving "Spirit," who requires no "payment" and bears no anger towards human beings (61). This notion eradicates any possibility to acquire some kind of control over the danger, hardship, and potential death that can be imposed by the physical landscape. The text is silent on this issue, leaving the impression that Inuit life is one of peace and serenity once the Christian message has been accepted. Itow can sit in the sun with flowers in her lap, a look of peace on her face now that "the fears had left her eyes!" (66, 70). The implied extrapolation here is that all Inuit people--or perhaps all human beings--can reside happily within the land which they will perceive to be beneficent, warm, and full of lovely things once they have embraced Christian beliefs.

At the conclusion of the story Ningiyuk chooses where her home will be. Each of her fathers has made a figurative statement regarding her worth (91). Her natural father has used currency, in the form of fox pelts, to express his feelings for her, and, since the amount is infinite, it is a strong statement about his desire to have her returned to him. On

the other hand, the significance of Komoyiok's expression carries more weight with her. Loss of his arm would mean his complete destruction. This man's self-worth rests on his abilities as a great hunter. Also, his very survival and that of his family depend on his hunting prowess, which in turn depends on his physical soundness. His analogy is that his love for Ningiyuk makes death for himself and his family preferable to losing her. Ningiyuk bases her choice on love, which is both the Christian and human message in the narrative. Reviewing her feelings for each of her family members, she acknowledges that she loves each one and is deeply loved by them. At the same time, she chooses the home that is located within the landscape--"my igloo world" (93)--rather than life in a settlement where she would live in a White man's house, attend school, and be incorporated into a way of life that appears to her to be remote from the land.

The landscape, for Ningiyuk, is the location and source of love. Throughout the narrative the elements and cycles of the natural world symbolize survival, ongoing life, and home. The sun's perpetual return after a period of darkness is a fine representation of the Christian theological perspective regarding life after death, and, in this text, performs double duty as a symbol for both the perpetuation of life on earth and the prospect of salvation, or everlasting life, on a spiritual plane. Assured salvation is the supreme signifier of the Great Spirit's love as it is developed in the Easter message (60-61). Ningiyuk elects to place herself, and her home, within the landscape, the site of familial love and the emblematic site of God's love. Symbolically, her choice is "God's home" rather than a place away from the land and thus distanced from God.

The literary project of Rokeby-Thomas is as clearly one of domestication as that of the earlier works in this chapter, particularly in its effort to provide documentary information. However, the Christian project of embedding religious spiritualism within the landscape sets this work apart. It partially recalls nineteenth-century beneficent sublimity by connecting the human and natural world on earth with an ordered universe controlled by a Supreme Being, yet the mystical and awe-inspiring grandeur characteristic of the earlier

representation is noticeably absent. In its place grows a comfortable kinship between humans and the natural world.

Within this group of works that assert human dominance over arctic landscape, one final book must be mentioned for its unequivocal attitude of superiority toward the natural world. *Arctic Adventure*, written by Willard Price, was published in 1980, making it something of an anomaly for its late appearance. Price adopts the rollicking, jolly tone of the "boy's adventure" genre of the late 1800s to depict two American teen-agers moving through the Arctic to capture animals for zoos. They make a pet of a polar bear, lasso a walrus, and enjoy an underwater serenade by several whales who "gathered around in a circle and sang" (160). The boys romp through their various adventures, virtually unscathed by the few mishaps they experience. When Roger tames the polar bear, training it to help them catch sea animals, he vividly demonstrates Price's textual project of domestication of the Arctic (156). After an airplane trip to the North Pole, the narrator reports: "No longer was it a place of mystery. Many explorers had given their lives in the struggle to reach it. Without any effort, thanks to Aram, the boys had stood where Peary had stood, *on the top of the world*" (93). Price has depicted the youths capturing, subduing, and taming the northern animals with very little "effort," demonstrating White mastery through personal skill and the use of advanced technology. The narrator attempts to be informative regarding the characteristics of northern wild life and habitat; however, the dismissive approach toward the natural world, combined with an unbelievable ease with which the boys meet with success, negates the effort toward realism. The text serves to illustrate the extremes to which the dominant discourse of mastery over the northern landscape could be extended.

B. ANIMAL STORIES

The titles hitherto discussed represent a discourse of containment that asserts control over the natural world, inserting human beings into the landscape, but setting them apart from it. Dependent on nature for sustenance, they are yet superior to it. This thematic approach to arctic landscape, which dominated children's fiction in the early 1900s, was counter-balanced by the genre of animal stories which appeared in numbers throughout the period.

Although most animal stories produced in the first half of the twentieth century were not specifically written for children, many were presented to young readers, or adopted by them, because they were written in a direct, informative style, and dealt with universally interesting subject matter. The genre in this period moved directly away from the sentimentalism of the previous century, exemplified by Marshall Saunders's *Beautiful Joe*, published in 1894, and the earlier *Black Beauty*, written by Anna Sewell in 1877. The new style, notable in the works of Ernest Thompson Seton and Charles G.D. Roberts, took a descriptive approach to the natural world, emphasizing the animal as subject of a work, presenting this subject with what Egoff and Saltman describe as "a rigorous naturalism" (90). Both Seton and Roberts were serious naturalists by profession. Their works reflect a strict adherence to the presentation of realistic, observable animal behavior. As a literary project, the recording of animal attributes places these writers within the larger project of mapping, naming, and thus domesticating the natural world. Yet Seton and Roberts, and those who followed their example, treat the natural world in a way that allows it to remain almost a law unto itself. While humans interact with, and sometimes overpower, the natural world of these stories, they remain subject to its inherent characteristics which cannot be eradicated.

One notable work by Roberts, published in 1909, reveals his concept of the northern landscape and the place of animal and human life within it. "On the Roof of the

World" sets a man, unnamed, and a polar bear together, both suffering from hunger, both stalking the same seal holes in search of food. Inhabiting the polar region is very like dwelling in an alien place of cosmic infinity. Roberts's descriptive passages are stark and dramatic, invoking the hidden, personified terror of sublimity in the environment:

> It seemed to be the very roof of the world, all naked to the outer cold, this flat vast of solitude, dimly outspread beneath the Arctic night. A line of little hills, mere knobs and hummocks, insignificant under the bitter starlight, served to emphasize the immeasurable and shelterless flatness of the surrounding expanse. Somewhere beneath the unfeatured levels the sea ended and the land began, but over all lay the monotony of ridged ice and icy, wind-scourged snow. The wind, which for weeks without a pause had torn screaming across the nakedness, had now dropped into calm; and with the calm there seemed to come in the unspeakable cold of space. (31)

Within the darkness, the man and the bear resemble each other in both appearance and hunting technique. The bear has "little, cruel eyes," and the man, "little, twinkling eyes" (32, 36). Both are imperceptible as they crawl, fur-clad, toward the breathing holes of the seals, mirroring each other in alternating periods of advancement and stillness, each unaware of the other. A sudden flaring of northern lights exerts the controlling force in the ensuing drama. When the "arch of glowing silver" first appears, the man cringes, fearing that the seals will be able to see him in the light. Reacting in a similar manner, the bear is said to have the same knowledge of the effect of light on his success: "The great white bear also raised his eyes towards that mysterious light, troubled at heart because he knew it was going to hamper his hunting" (39). Roberts skirts anthropomorphism by ascribing this knowledge to an innate instinct in the "heart" of the animal. The seals, too, react to the illumination by seizing the opportunity to check their surroundings for signs of danger. The northern lights flare up in dazzling brilliancy, suddenly die out, then burst up again. During their first flash, the bear and man each use the time to improve their positions, the

bear creeping forward, the man moving his body to increase blood circulation. When darkness returns, both rush toward the seals, taking advantage of the limited visibility. The man's lack of night vision causes him to pause, and the bear is the triumphant hunter of the moment. However, once again the northern lights break out, and the man and bear confront each other. Their thrusts and parries, like their earlier hunting techniques, are described in similar terms. Ultimately, the man triumphs over the bear. His success is directly due to the light overhead which allows him to use his keen eyesight to aim an accurate rifle shot at the bear. Without the light, the bear held the advantage in size, strength, and weapons.

Roberts's representation of the northern lights symbolizes the whim of nature that operates on all creatures, influencing every aspect of life and death within the land. Roberts extends the metaphor by hinting that chance and coincidence in the natural world may be controlled by a higher power: "But suddenly, as if at a handsweep of the Infinite, the great lights vanished" (41). The apparent randomness and chaos in the action of the lights are resolved into some kind of order:

> [I]n a flash the still silver radiance of the aurora broke up and flamed into a riot of dancing colour. Parallel rays like the pipes of a titanic organ, reaching almost from the horizon to the zenith, hurtled madly from side to side, now elongating, now shortening abruptly, now seeming to clash against one another, but always in an ordered madness of right lines. Unearthly green, palpitating into rose, and thinnest sapphire, and flame-colour, and ineffably tender violet, the dance of these cohorts of the magnetic rays went on, across the stupendous arc of sky. . . . (40)

While the reference to "magnetic rays" recalls the scientific explanation of the aurora, it does not dispel the magical and spiritual attributes that are embedded in the display. Explainable as the northern lights may be, they yet evince a cosmic order in the universe that remains incomprehensible through its apparent "madness." The light, which has a

critical impact on life and death for the seals, the bear, and the man, thus signifies the existence of an all-encompassing power controlling earthly events.

The authors writing in this era, who strove for realism in their animal stories, reflect Roberts's concern for depicting a form of naturalism that ascribes to nature an order of things to which all life is subject. Jack London, who is known to have used works by Roberts as source material (Watson 81), variously invokes "the law of life," the "law of club and fang," and, in *White Fang*, the "law of meat" to disclose the likeness of humans and animals and their similar place within the natural world. In their efforts to draw human beings as close as possible to the natural world, these early twentieth-century writers of animal stories lean at times toward ascribing human-like behavior, and sometimes human motivation, to their animal subjects, while at the same time backing away from full-blown anthropomorphism by emphasizing unreasoning instinct as the driving force of action.

Egoff and Saltman defend the humanizing aspect in works by Roberts and other writers of the genre by noting that the strength of this type of presentation rests in its biographical characteristics:

> Like the biographer, then, they undertook an analysis of character that was based on the influence of environment, youthful training, and education, with a selection of facts and events to make the portrait emerge clearly. Their animals are not mere automatons, led by blind instinct; they are creatures that possess the faculty of reason--but not human reason. (90)

Charles N. Watson, Jr., in his analysis of Jack London's works, makes the same point regarding the form of naturalism that appears in *White Fang*: "What pervades the novel is not so much a pure naturalistic determinism as a more flexible view with the imperatives of heredity and environment tempered by the whims of chance and the recognition of free will" (91). According to Watson, a "purposeless concantenation of savage forces," consisting merely of repeated cycles of killing and eating, with a blind chance determining which animals live and die, is "the nightmare world of the naturalist" (96). London avoids

the "nightmare" in *White Fang* by allowing a kind of animal reasoning that signifies a limited degree of choice bounded by heredity and environment. He, as well as other authors of animal stories, project a concept of the natural world wherein human beings, animals, and the physical environment are linked to form an all-encompassing landscape that is ordered, in some indefinable way, by the powers of Nature.

Francis Dickie's story of a young musk-ox named Umingmuk utilizes the biographical approach as described by Egoff and Saltman, incorporating the naturalist's technique of documenting observed behavior and speculating on the forces that motivate animal actions. The story, "Monarch of the Arctic Prairies," appears in a collection titled, *Umingmuk of the Barrens*, which was published in 1927. In his narrative, Dickie addresses three themes: the mysterious nature of animal instinct; human place within the natural world; and the impact of the natural world on all life dwelling within it.

The story includes descriptive details regarding musk-oxen and the landscape, denoting both the naturalist's effort to inform and the early twentieth-century literary intent to make the northern wilderness known and understood. Like Stefansson, Dickie is adamant about the nurturing, life-filled nature of the arctic prairies. The area where Umingmuk is born is particularly hospitable:

> But the twins were as strong and healthy as any musk-ox ever born beside this quietly flowing stream, called on the maps of the white men the Thelon river, but named more musically Arkilinik by the Eskimo, which means "wooded water"; for it was more generously fringed with trees than the other rivers which took their course through this vast expanse of prairie lying within the Arctic Circle in Northern Canada, a region which the Eskimo speaks of as Nuttaliknak, and the Indians Deechinulee, both words meaning "land without trees," titles more truly descriptive and more euphonious than the white man's Barren Grounds, a name suggestive of an expanse drear and lifeless, which the Arctic prairies never are. (14-15)

Dickie allows the nineteenth-century sublime perception of the land to emerge in his narrative; however, by juxtaposing it with musk-ox habitation of the region, he subverts the older concept by converting it into only one of several ways to judge this environment. In the middle of winter, Umingmuk surveys the scene before him:

> Nothing moved in this dead world. Under the grip of the relentless frost these northern reaches rested, profoundly still, sleeping the long sleep of winter, an infinite calm, overhung by cold almost as dreadful as that of the unknown void surrounding the myriad stars. In this cold, bitter beyond words, which ruled malignant and terrible for eight months in the year, it seemed no living thing could continue to exist. Yet on this flat plain, cold-shining with a dead light ineffably melancholy, over which battled sometimes for a week on end great winds contrary of direction, Umingmuk was at home. Thick-wooled of undercoat, covered with long outer hair, he was by nature fitted to survive even here where life's existing was a marvel. (84-85)

During raging blizzards, Umingmuk rests, "quite uncaring," covered by the snow that insulates him from the cold (107). Then, too, the land has characteristics that welcome humans:

> There then lay a matter of one thousand three hundred miles of wilderness way to be covered before Edmonton and railroads to the outside world would be available. Much of this way was possible by water, for in the Canadian northland, Dame Nature, as if moved by consideration for man's needs, has laid out a marvelously connected chain of waters, lakes and rivers scattered with a prodigality and connexion that makes the vast sub-Arctic region the most easily accessible of any wilderness portion of earth. (37-38)

Dickie's description of water systems that pervade the land coincides with his introduction of Mr. Buffalo Smith, a White man portrayed in the traditional mold of the heroic British adventurer. Skilled in wilderness travel, Smith is extraordinarily respectful of animals: his mission is not to kill, but to capture live specimens for British zoos. Buffalo Smith makes a quite brief appearance in the narrative, largely in order to provide a device of plot that presents Umingmuk, the primary character, with a problem to resolve. However, the episodes involving the White man create an opportunity for Dickie to comment on human interaction with nature. The author views the Indians with disrespect for their indiscriminate slaughter of animal life (18), while White men may be disreputable or honorable, depending on their degree of restraint in hunting. The Inuit he holds in high esteem: "Straightforward, never breaking a contract, happy and light-hearted as children, good workers, always quick to help, and rising superior to their harsh environment in manner the Indians of the northland never did, the Eskimo is a splendid ally to the white man . . ." (45). Dickie bases his comparison of the Indian and Inuit races on the degree to which they have succeeded in mastering the arctic land. And, too, he makes Smith the epitome of human success in the Barrens; the White man moves intelligently and with ease throughout the terrain, successfully capturing a small herd of musk-oxen, then heroically exiting from the wilderness stage:

> That marvellous journey of Buffalo Smith and his Eskimos from the Arkilinik river to the shores of Hudson Bay with the captured musk-oxen is history now. How they built their rafts of spruce and floated down the river; how Beverly Lake and adjoining ones were crossed, and the waters of Chesterfield Inlet, and the many portages traversed, is a tale of Arctic herculean labour to which not that of the ill-fated Franklin and his party is comparable. (80)

Smith is portrayed as an example of White, human dominance over the natural world, a typical figure of the fictional narratives written in this period. Yet within one

oblique reference to the man's instinctive knowledge regarding the wilderness, Dickie establishes the connecting thread that promotes the notion of man and animal as profoundly similar: "Buffalo Smith was one of those men who seem gifted with an ability to find new game regions--a sort of sixth sense it is, one which in his case had made him among the most famous modern wild-animal hunters in the entire world" (44). Smith's superiority among his own kind, and his successful management within the Barren Grounds, foretell the story of Umingmuk. In addition, the narrative style used to delineate this "sort of sixth sense," which emphasizes the indescribable, mysterious nature of Smith's talent, is identical to Dickie's approach in relating Umingmuk's behavior.

From the moment of his birth, Umingmuk reveals that he is a unique individual among musk-ox calves. His superior strength and size elicits within him, as a young calf, instinctive feelings that both form his character and establish him later in life as a leader:

> As Umingmuk stood upon this mountain peak in miniature, a queer thrill filled his being; that strange something which wells up strongly in man and beast and bird in moments of supremacy over one or more of their kind. And Umingmuk was a bull calf! In him the battling spirit was instinctive. So in the following moment he blew through his nostrils a baby "woof" quite comical, but most expressive of his developing nature. (25)

Once Umingmuk finds himself alone on the plains, due to Buffalo Smith's capture of the herd, the young musk-ox begins a "wild-animal Odyssey" of heroic magnitude that equals the journey of the human hunter (81). His reactions to events that befall him on his trip are variously addressed in terms of innate instinct, heredity, and learned response. At the outset, Umingmuk is compelled to seek out another herd of musk-ox through instinct: "Loneliness filled Umingmuk's heart as he watched the long Arctic night creep down; and in his heart, stronger than ever before, was the queer urge to keep on travelling, to go on seeking for what he as yet did not realize he wanted" (85). Dickie's narrative places a strong emphasis on the "queer urge" by rephrasing and repeating it several times during the

course of the story. It appears later as a "strange, amorphous longing" that the animal mind is never allowed to comprehend fully , although Umingmuk is shown to be aware of it (105).

Dickie is explicit in his terminology, carefully avoiding any implication that animal reasoning approaches human logic. Umingmuk's experience with a lone, predatory wolf reveals the author's perspective regarding the scope of the mental processes of animals. Resting in a shallow cave, the young musk-ox grows suddenly aware of the presence of the wolf: "Marvel of Nature, this instantly arriving fear, born of an understanding that was his the first hour on earth; an understanding rising superior to the need of mother's teaching, or that harsher instructor, experience" (88). Umingmuk and Amaruk, the wolf, remain absolutely still for several hours, watching each other, until suddenly the wolf disappears. The narrator explains both this action and the trick Amaruk uses to lure Umingmuk from the cave as learned behavior due to experience (95). The musk-ox has two contradictory, instinctive responses to his situation:

> Yet stronger and stronger did the feeling grow, this avid curiosity which was the heritage of Umingmuk and all his kind, and so many other species of horned creatures that walk the world. A woolly bundle of contradictions was Umingmuk, just as countless other living things that move on earth, a thing of flesh and blood, and varying emotions often warring with each other. Now, safe here in this cavern, instinct, deeply wise, bade him with sternest warning not to venture forth. Opposing it rose curiosity, a foolish inhiation, a gaping after needless information. On went the battle between these conflicting emotions that were older than the body and brain harbouring them, and which ruled Umingmuk's life, now one force uppermost, now the other. (96)

Umingmuk is faced with making a choice that, by Dickie's definition, means following the instinct that ultimately is the stronger, thus keeping the motivations of the musk-ox within

the limitations of animal reasoning. Curiosity overpowers wisdom, and Umingmuk ventures forth, only to be attacked by Amaruk. In the end, victory belongs to Umingmuk by virtue of his youthful strength which subdues the wiser, but aged, wolf.

Nature's ways remain unpredictable, and, at times, appear to be aimlessly haphazard. Just a few days before Amaruk encounters Umingmuk, he has a battle with a caribou, in which a chance effect of Nature weighs as the deciding factor. The caribou had shed his horns a brief time earlier, rendering him a defenceless victim for the hungry wolf (90). Life is sustained in the wolf, only to be extinguished five days later by the younger and stronger musk-ox. At this point the narrative suggests the "naturalist's nightmare," in which killing and being killed becomes a purposeless chain of chance events provoked by a disinterested Nature, which is symbolized here by the dispassionate, watching northern lights. The "incomprehensible Arctic Aurora" illuminate the scene between Umingmuk and Amaruk, "gay torchbearers at this grim ringside, awaiting the combatants' engaging" (87, 94). Yet Dickie imposes order on the sequential deaths both by emphasizing the aged conditions of the caribou and wolf, and by invoking the natural law of survival of the fittest: "Amaruk lay still--one more broken emblem of youth's conquest of age" (104). And Nature does appear to care for the individuals that inhabit the earth:

> Sharp and frosty with biting breath it [the wind] went sweeping over the striated snow, and wailed around the ridge and into the crevice of the musk-ox's cavern, a dreary threnody of this Arctic waste, as though the mother north wind were improvising a lamentation for that old grey form bruised and flattened and stiff with death on the ensanguined snow. (104)

While the text prevents the reasoning powers of animal minds from becoming like those of humans, a human dimension is occasionally ascribed to instincts that are identical to those of animals. In the final episode in the story, Umingmuk and the other musk-oxen in his new-found community are beset by wildfire sweeping across the plains. They join the rest of the animal world fleeing in terror; "Of all the panics which living things--men,

beasts and birds--are heir to, that born of fire is the greatest; no others even nearly compare in power. Fire-fear robs many of mankind, and all the animal kingdom, of reason's every vestige" (138). At the conclusion of the story Dickie completes the circular path his theme has taken. The fire has swept on past Umingmuk and his companions, who are left to recover on the burned-out plain. Their immediate problem is thirst. Umingmuk assumes leadership of the small herd and sets off in search of water: "Long and hard was the march, and nearly done was Umingmuk when that seeming sixth sense, so strong in some creatures of the wild, brought him at last late on the following day to a new lake about a mile in length" (145). Umingmuk's "seeming sixth sense," like Smith's, constitutes a mysterious ability to survive in the wilderness. In this respect, the narrator has shown man and animal to be alike.

The natural forces that operate on both Smith and Umingmuk remain mysterious. Sometimes personified, "Dame Nature" appears to have controlled the success and survival of both the man and the animal. The waterways that are so helpful to Smith seem randomly scattered, but, in fact, provide the key to his success. Umingmuk's surprising survival of the fire comes about through the "freakish" nature of the conflagration, when a few slabs of rock cause a slight diversion in the path of the flames, leaving him on a patch of unburned ground (142-43). The small herd of musk-oxen escapes destruction, according to Dickie, through a random combination of natural forces:

> Luck of life?--Yes; luck of life!--one term fit, and one term only, by which to explain Umingmuk's salvation and that of his few companions; that in his panic fleeing he should have taken a course which, ordinarily, would have meant destruction only the quicker in its coming; but instead had been the means of his retaining life and leading to safety the instinctively following few of the herd whose speed had been sufficiently lasting to keep near to him, by Nature given such superior virility. (141-42)

Umingmuk's "luck" consists in his superior strength, the chance out-cropping of rocks, and the blind path he took as a result of instinctive panic; all of which offer evidence of the workings of "Nature."

Nature's effects are ultimately the observable results of "necromancy" in Dickie's narrative (105). Like other naturalist writers of his time, he helped to establish a literary discourse that insists on an integration of humans with the landscape by presenting undeniable evidence of kinship among all living things within the natural world. The essence at the core of this kinship remains a mystery, but the connection is irrefutable. Although the authors of animal stories followed the dominant discourse of their time in terms of human mastery over the land, they did not relinquish the concept of mystery. Their discourse merely transformed it from grandeur and terror to an element of existence, the substance of which cannot be explained. While the publication of naturalistic animal stories declined in the middle decades of the twentieth century, the naturalist's theme was firmly established, to be carried forward and to gain in strength during the 1960s and later.

CHAPTER IV

LATE TWENTIETH-CENTURY FICTION

A. SPIRITS IN THE LAND

James Houston is invariably one of the first authors mentioned in any discussion of children's fiction set in the Canadian north. Egoff and Saltman regard him as "today our most prolific and articulate spokesman for the Arctic, for its people in crisis, and for a way of life that has still much to offer other cultures" (27). Houston produced his first work, *Tikta'Liktak*, in 1965, and, since then, has published over fifteen volumes of stories, poems, and legends with the Arctic as setting. Although most of his works are survival stories with happy endings, Houston's representation of the arctic landscape remains forbidding; he portrays the environment saturated with latent horror. Harking back to the Sublime aesthetics found in the literature of England in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Houston emphasizes fearfulness in association with human habitation within the natural world. Nature seems never to be without an aura of menace--the terror of the Sublime as Burke would have it--in his narratives: the positive aspects of inspirational wonder are evident only rarely. Death is consistently present in images of peril. In fact, Houston concentrates so heavily on the connections between death and the landscape that his work is perhaps better-labelled gothic, which Marjorie Nicolson notes is a quality that has descended from the earlier "Aesthetics of the Infinite," as developed by Dennis (283). The threat and danger of the natural world in Houston's stories bespeak what Northey calls "the most basic of all gothic motifs--the awareness of death" (108).

Despite the ever-present terror, however, Houston's narratives contain a discourse that imbues the environment with life-sustaining properties. To some extent, his works continue the early twentieth-century literary project that intends to inform the reader of realistic details related to survival in the Arctic. Houston inserts into his narratives descriptive material regarding the abilities and techniques which the Inuit have developed in

order to utilize elements in the landscape for nourishment and shelter. In addition, Houston's works emphasize a magic that places an unknown, inexplicable power in the natural world, a power that both inflicts death and sustains life for no apparent reason. A similar power is ascribed to the multiple spirits that constitute Inuit beliefs in the works of Lillian Murray and Rokeby-Thomas. Houston, however, does not provide textual references to propitiating actions, or to any other means, spiritual or physical, for gaining human control over this power. Nor does he suggest the existence of a universal order operating on the natural world, as did the authors of animal stories mentioned earlier in this study. He does, nevertheless, consistently depict life prevailing, against formidable odds, within the arctic setting.

In *Wolf Run*, Houston depends on elements of gothicism, including lunacy, to develop a theme of interconnection between humans and Nature. A young Inuit boy, Punik, sets out to find help for his starving family, armed with the hunting gear and skills he has inherited from his father and grandfather. Nature has done its fearful work on Punik's family. "Bad fortune" caused the death of his father when caribou overturned a kayak in the river (11). Since then, "Misfortune and famine had come to haunt his people like the black shadow from a raven's wing," and the caribou migration "had failed them" (10). Gothic elements of menacing death and mystical unreality proliferate as Punik sets out across the land:

> Punik knew that he, too, was dying, that his bones would turn white and disappear like dust. . . . In his mind's eye, Punik could see the caribou far away in the darkness, moving northward in great herds like silent ghosts against the whiteness of the snow. Above their backs the moonlight caught the cloud of vapor formed by their breathing and spun it into a silver sheen. (16)

On the first night of his journey, a kind of madness overtakes Punik: "He imagined that his strength dripped away into the snow, like warm water oozing from his feet, filling every

footstep he left behind" (24). He begins alternately to laugh, sing, and talk wildly, finally pulling at his hair to "feel a different kind of pain" and distract himself from hunger (26). Empty and shadowless, the silent land mirrors his madness; he imagines the snow "squealing beneath his feet, laughing at him" (27). The onset of evening, marked by the "blood-red ball of sun that slid slowly down into the freezing grayness of the western sky," depicts for Punik the impending end to his own life (26).

At an early stage in his trip, Punik passes by the wolf run, a place that symbolizes life in a multiplicity of ways. In the past, female wolves produced their litters and raised their families here. As well, his grandmother's story of her youth suggests Punik's origination at this spot:

> She told them how she and their grandfather had often walked together on the wolf run when the first spring moon rode through the sky, for it was like a sacred place to them, a place where life begins. But that was long ago, she said, when they were both young, even before Punik's mother or father had been born. (34)

The wolf run remains a sign of the perpetuation of life in Punik's time. True to Houston's depiction of unfathomable Nature, the site is, "for some curious reason," a meeting place for the wolves, where they gather to find a mate; as well, the narrator suggests, "perhaps they came because, like humans, they sometimes wished to be in company with others, to play, to argue, and to sing together when the moon was full" (22).

Unity among Punik, his people, and the wolves becomes the crux of the narrative. Punik dreams of his grandmother and the lessons she has taught him: how to survive using the land and its ways, how to conduct himself with patience and silence, and, through legends and observation, how to understand the natural world. She is the repository of ancient Inuit civilization, the source of life for Punik genetically and with regard to the skills of survival: "All of these things she taught Punik and his sister, who were part of her continuing family. She carried ancient knowledge deep within herself, wisdom that

women have always possessed, wisdom that they have carefully handed down to their children and grandchildren since the beginning of mankind" (31). In conjunction with this dream, Punik hears the howling of wolves in the distance and knows that they too are hungry. The wolves' howls are likened to the drumming and singing of his people, which are carried out in the hope of calling up the caribou (27). In despair, and at the end of his strength, Punik comes face-to-face with a male wolf and its mate. A shift in the narrative makes Punik animal-like, while the two wolves take on the characteristics that have earlier been ascribed to his human ancestors. Punik howls like a wolf--a technique his grandmother taught him--and the wolves do not attack. Instead, as "tireless, steady runners and wise, expert killers," these "wolf mates" go after a caribou while Punik is left "watching the chase like a hungry animal" (52-53). After the successful hunt, the wolves leave a caribou for Punik, becoming the agents that reverse his course toward certain death. Punik uses the tools and knowledge of his forebears to carry on:

> With his father's knife he slashed the caribou open and ate its hot red liver. . . . The powerful idea that he might live again slowly came to him. . . . Kneeling again and growing stronger, treasuring his new feeling of hope, he used the knife quickly and cleverly. He removed the caribou's thick, warm hide. Then with his knife and the soft heel of his boot, Punik broke the sharp crust of snow and hollowed out a soft nest below the level of the wind. (59)

Punik settles down in the depression to rest and restore his strength, his body and mind on the way to recovery. His next awakening is akin to a rebirth: "Punik sat up in his shallow gravelike hole in the snow, still wrapped in the new caribou skin" (63). The animal world is the source of his "new skin," and renewed conviction of life. Punik reflects on his recovery: "Then he remembered that he was not alive because of his own cleverness, nor had this first meat come from the skill of his hunting. Life was not so simple as that. . . . He knew now that his grandfather and his grandmother had sent their spirits

with the wolves to help him" (63). The wolves, as bearers of life, symbolize the human connection with the natural world.

Gothic "awareness of death" appears prominently in the latter half of *Wolf Run*. An abandoned fishing camp provides an eerie, horror-filled experience of nightmare proportions, as Punik slowly realizes it is a lifeless spot. The ultimate horror is his discovery of the upright, frozen body of a man whom he knows. Mystery joins with the terror of the moment: "Yet why did he alone remain standing there like a sleepwalker, his frozen fingers pointing blindly into the west?" (40). There is a strong suggestion that Punik's destiny holds a similar fate, a suggestion supported by the land surrounding this death camp:

> He looked back only once and saw the dead man pointing at him. Around him stretched a vast frozen loneliness, and for the third time Punik heard a wolf howl. . . . Now he knew how much he feared to die all by himself on this lonely, freezing plain. But on that night and the one that followed, he heard nothing save the ghostlike whispering of the wind as it crept like a pale wolf along the hard, sharp edges of the snowdrifts. (42-43)

Northey observes that a major development of the gothic style incorporates exaggerated contrasts, much like those the surrealist painters utilized in their works (5). In *Wolf Run*, Houston makes use of this technique by alternating symbols of life with morbid sequences involving death. Walking away from the camp of horror, Punik has a strange "waking dream" in which he visualizes his home camp, complete with signs of vibrant life: his mother's new baby, the summer tundra, new caribou skins, and cooking meat from a successful hunt (45). From this, the narrative immediately shifts back to Punik in the midst of death: "Nothing, he thought, nothing could be worse than the loneliness of dying all by himself out on the frozen whiteness of this inhuman plain. . . . He ran forward, loosely, like a skeleton in tattered rags . . ." (46). By interspersing symbols of life among those of death and madness, Houston portrays the uncertainty of life and death. Although the Inuit

have been able to devise survival skills, perpetuating them through successive generations, knowledge of the land neither ensures continued existence nor controls the prevailing power of Nature; it does, however, allow the inhabitants of the Arctic to exist within the domain ruled by Nature's powers.

Houston's gothic predilection regarding landscape is as evident in *The White Archer* as it is in *Wolf Run*; however, there is a distinctive difference. In *The White Archer*, the landscape is terrifying only when it is not home. Unfamiliar territory has strange qualities that produce fear precisely because they are unknown, and because they represent what is culturally feared at home. The Inuit concept of the land of trees as a "dreaded territory" derives from its Indian inhabitants, and also from a lack of knowledge and skill for surviving in it: "The Eskimos feared the Indians and their country. The harnesses of their dog teams became entangled in these little stick trees. Ancient Eskimo stories told of terrifying nights spent there, for the wind made the trees moan and whisper like lost souls" (13-14). In the narrative, three Inuit men have come to this land because they are starving. Creeping up on an Indian camp "through the dreaded trees," they stalk "cautiously through the dreaded, unfamiliar country" (14), attack the camp to steal some meat, and return to their home territory, anticipating no reprisals from the Indians: "They knew that the Indians would not venture far from the Land of Little Sticks, for the Indians hated and feared the great treeless, barren land where they could find no wood for their fires nor lodge poles for their tents and became lost traveling in endless circles out on the terrible wind-swept plain" (17). Houston portrays two very different landscapes, each of which has been made into a manageable home site that provides for survival and the continuance of life. The Inuit and Indians both view the other's territory as frightening because they lack the knowledge to live within it, knowledge which comes from intimacy with that particular type of landscape. Thus, Houston locates the source of gothic horror and sublime terror in the unknown. The end of the narrative reinforces this concept when Kungo, an Inuit boy now grown to manhood, ventures into Indian land to seek revenge for

the destruction of his family and the abduction of his sister, Shulu. Finding Shulu comfortable and happy with Natawa, her Indian husband, Kungo learns that the forested land is a favorable site for habitation. Furthermore, he discovers that the Indians are not the frightening beings he had believed them to be (90, 91). Kungo and Natawa agree to come together in the spring to hunt and fish "at the high falls between the two lands" (93); this meeting will signify an amicable intermingling of what had once been human and environmental differences in fearful and death-dealing opposition to each other.

A symbolic rebirth occurs to Kungo, as it did to Punik. However, instead of a horrifying progress toward death that ends in a grave-like site, Kungo's reincarnation is a purification, achieved within a landscape that reflects the Purgatory of Dante's *Divine Comedy*. In addition, the site, suggestive of an animate womb, is replete with symbols of Nature's nourishing, restorative attributes.

When the Indians wipe out his family, Kungo escapes to a distant camp where he is adopted by Inukpuk, a seal hunter, and his wife. During his two-year stay here, he learns of a wise man on a distant island, and determines that this "strange old man full of mystery, with a knowledge of the ways of men and animals," can help him in his desire for revenge against the Indians (24). Inukpuk guides Kungo to the island, through a terrifying region that evokes a notion of an icy hell:

> The barren rock island was hidden from view, wrapped in whirling drifts of snow. Dark patches of open water and frightening black holes showed dangerously against the whiteness of the snow-covered ice. In the bitter cold these open holes threw up gray fog against the darkened sky, and mists froze and fell back like snow into the black water. Many times the hunter had to walk before the dogs, feeling with his harpoon for a safe passage across the treacherous sea ice that was broken by the rising and falling tides. (26).

Engulfed by a blizzard while crossing an ice bridge, they are forced to stop and spend the night without shelter. Kungo's reaction to this experience is one of sublime terror: "Kungo lay shivering, listening in fear and wonder to the great sighing of the new-formed ice. If the ice bridge broke, they would drown in the freezing waters" (26). Kungo and Inukpuk barely cling to life throughout the night. Eluding the menace of the freezing "inferno" below, they reach the island with its looming mountain and narrow pathway rising before them. Kungo must reach a level that lies well above and beyond their position on the shore, in order to undergo the training that will eventually purge him of his anger. As with Dante's mountain of Purgatory, the ascent proves steep and difficult:

> The hunter drove his team along the ice ledge on the south face of the island cliffs toward the narrow opening in the rock wall. The entrance to the steep passage stood before them like a needle's eye. They began the climb, and so hard was the ascent that they often had to help the dogs to find footing. At length they reached a narrow slit in the top of the cliff. It led into a huge round place surrounded by rust-colored granite walls rising higher than a man could throw a stone. It was roofless--and so wide that Kungo thought he could not cross it in a hundred leaps. (27)

The moment of Kungo's entry into this mountain bowl marks the beginning of his transformation and regeneration. Significantly, the event is described in terms that denote sexual penetration and conception. Inukpuk, Kungo's adoptive father, acts as the agent of the boy's placement in this womb-like mountain amphitheater. At the base of a cliff, dug into the earth, lies a small house constructed of stone, whale ribs, sealskins, and sod: things of the earth and sea that, in this context, represent the protection and fostering of life. Kungo enters the dwelling through a narrow passageway, to be welcomed by an aged Inuit woman who provides him with food and a place to rest. Having been fed, the boy spends his first night enveloped in this nurturing environment:

> The seal hunter and Kungo lay back on the soft caribou furs, glad to be safe in the warmth of this old stone house. Kungo looked up and wondered at the mighty ribs that curved across the low ceiling, and as he drifted off to sleep, he imagined himself inside the living body of a whale as it plunged into the depths of the sea. (32)

Now in an embryo-like state, Kungo awakens the next day to find that Inukpuk has withdrawn, leaving him implanted in what is to become the cleansing, regenerative site of his re-connection with the landscape. At the same time, this location will provide him with the values necessary for living at peace with both the human and natural world.

At this point in the narrative, Houston abandons gothic imagery in landscape representation. Kungo's new home furnishes a secure, beneficent existence that forges a link between himself and his environment. The human inhabitants of the island perform a major role in this process, for they themselves symbolize, in a mystical fashion, an integration of humans with the natural world. The Inuit woman, who goes unnamed except by the epithet "the old woman," is described in terms that make of her an emblem of "mother earth":

> To Kungo she did not seem like other people. She was somehow like the earth itself. Speaking with her, he had the same feeling he had when he lay on soft tundra, warmed by the summer sun, and looked up at the wide blue sky. Then he felt he could understand every word of the wind's song. She was that kind of person. (36)

The old woman also appears to be a kind of sorceress as she tends her lamp during Kungo's first night in the stone house: "Then the old woman cleverly drew the flame along the lamp's wick until it made the whole house glow with a soft, even light" (30). This adjustment alters the appearance of Ittok, the old man, who, until now, had remained hidden in shadows: "But now the ancient wrinkled face and hands seemed to glow like ivory, and there was light around the old man's long white hair and the thin traces of his

beard" (32). The old man also has mystical qualities. His voice is deep, like a "great singer," and he regards Kungo in a way that inspires awe: "His eyelids fluttered and opened, he slowly turned his head, and he looked at Kungo with eyes that were dark green and shadowy like pools of water on the sea ice" (32).

Through many seasons and several years Kungo works to acquire the mental and physical attributes of a powerful, skilled hunter. Ittok teaches him to use his mind as well as his physical strength to shoot accurately with a bow and arrow. At the same time, the old man attempts to instill in him essential precepts relating to human interaction with the natural world, which includes other human beings. Still intent on revenge, Kungo has set up models of a bear and a man for target practice. Ittok questions his actions:

> "Are you an enemy of all white bears?" asked the old man.
>
> Kungo thought about this question for a moment.
>
> "No," he answered, "but I hope that one day a white bear will offer himself to me."
>
> "Then do not drive arrows into his image or all white bears will be offended. And men, Kungo, would you do harm to all men?"
>
> "No," said Kungo quickly. "I seek eleven bowmen. Those will I harm. Those I will kill."
>
> "Hear me well, Kungo," Ittok said. "Do not give men cause to fear you, for one who does that is no better than a dog gone mad, wishing only to bite and kill." (41-42)

To Ittok, anger, revenge, and murder contradict natural laws in the same way that madness perverts the animal world. He repeats this lesson at a later date when they are out hunting: "A man does not just kill because he is a clever hunter. He succeeds in the hunt only if he is a good man, a wise man, who obeys the rules of life" (49). The old woman, too, is concerned about Kungo's relentless anger: "I must say to you that hatred and revenge

follow each other like two strong men piling heavy stones one upon the other until the stones fall, killing both men and perhaps many others" (68).

Kungo, guided by the inhabitants of the mountain bowl, finally achieves a type of spiritual purity, symbolized by the completely white outfit with which he makes his trip to Indian territory. His clothing, made from white caribou hides, matches his team of white wolf dogs, who pull a bleached driftwood sled with harnesses made of white sealskin. About to begin his journey, Kungo undergoes a naming ritual when Ittok shoots a white goose and presents the feathers to him, stating: "'These are feathers for a white archer. It is right that you should have them. But you must never kill this bird nor eat its flesh, for you bear its name. You came to us from the wild geese, and when you die, your spirit will fly free and live with the snow geese once more. They are a part of you'" (67). The symbolic purity appears to be premature at this point, inasmuch as the purpose of Kungo's departure is his search for revenge. However, he has acquired new physical and spiritual connections with the natural world. Furthermore, during the first stage of his trip, his passing through a landscape evocative of sublime infinity suggests that he has reverted to the innocence of a pre-birth state: "But Kungo knew that the whiteness of his clothing and the white sled and team had caused him to disappear like magic into the great whiteness of the ice bridge" (72). He travels for several days through a land that is entirely white and silent, with no sign of any living thing, until a blizzard forces him to remain in a snowhouse for five days, "where he slept and dreamed and waked and thought and slept again" (75). When the storm abates, the landscape is "only a vast white silence," like a "white magic place." Kungo is, in effect, reduced to nothingness, where even his spatial orientation deserts him: "Everything had changed, and the leaden-colored storm clouds hid the sun and stars and would not tell him east from west." However, in time, knowledge about the land resolves his problem: "Kungo bent down and with his bare hands felt beneath the snow, for under this new snow he knew that the old drifts ran north and south. When he moved his hands along the old hard ridges, he learned the direction that he must

travel" (75). This gesture, a physical contact with the land with bare skin, serves as a final reconnection that starts him forward on his journey into the world.

The "magic" essence in the landscape that operates on Kungo at the outset of his trip differs significantly from the fearful, mysterious qualities embedded in the natural world at the beginning of the narrative. While Houston initially utilizes traditional gothic imagery to describe physical setting, he shifts away from it as Kungo's transformation progresses. When the story opens, fish move in the water like "green ghosts," while the igloo village stands absolutely silent, as though deserted under the fiery rays of the setting sun (7, 8). Later, during Kungo's training as a hunter out on the plains, the land evokes a sense of pleasant comfort. The hunting trip, extending throughout the summer, provides an abundance of food and articles that will sustain the group during the following winter. Sunshine and bird song reflect joyful sublimity in nature, much as the Romantic poets saw it (Nicolson 27): "Together [Kungo and the old woman] walked out across the land, and with every step they responded to the wonder of the quick Arctic spring as it burst around them" (55). Toward the end of the story, natural symbols grow progressively more grand and solemn, mirroring the mystical and spiritual qualities that mark Kungo's passage from embryonic existence into life: "Then in the distance he made out a long line of caribou, looking like spots of silver on the horizon, slowly moving north" (77).

The story's conclusion, which involves Kungo's reconciliation with Shulu's adopted land and people, portrays a peaceful resolution of differences, proving that Kungo's training in the mountain did effect a purging of his wrath. It signifies on-going life, as opposed to perpetuation of violent death as it might have occurred, according to the old woman's illustrative lesson about men and rocks (68). Houston, by illustrating acceptance of what seems strange and unfamiliar, demonstrates that different viewpoints have limitations that are sometimes blinding. In this text, he offers a commentary on two concerns of modern times: the acceptance of cultural differences, and the peaceful co-existence of individuals and nations.

In *Frozen Fire*, Houston continues to address the issue of cultural difference, within the context of human kinship with the natural world. This is the first of three works that unite Matthew Morgan, a White teen-ager from southern Canada, with Kayak, an Inuit boy living in Frobisher Bay. Their adventures offer a view of contemporary life in the Arctic, focusing attention on the juxtaposition and intermingling of Inuit and White cultures. The technology and attitudes that come from "the south" appear in opposition to traditional Inuit ways of managing within the landscape, ways that use natural elements to preserve and nurture life. *Frozen Fire* exhibits the gothic, menacing terror found in the landscape of the works already discussed; moreover, it utilizes a symbolic place of nurturing that resembles that developed in *The White Archer*. Matthew and Kayak become lost while out hunting for Matthew's father, and are miraculously rescued and cared for by a "wild man" and his wife in a strange home beneath the snow:

> Matthew stared through the gloom, trying to decide whether he was in a round house that had been built above the ground or in a strange natural cave beneath the earth. He could see a foot-long yellow line of flame wavering and burning like a dozen candles on either side of the room. Everything else lay in shadows. Just above his head were the curved rib bones of ancient whales supporting the roof. They gave him the eerie feeling that he was inside the body of a living monster. (103)

This place marks a site of renewal for the boys, yet its presentation lacks the mystical, rebirth symbolism of the stone house in *The White Archer*. Instead, a comic madness, hinting at menace, permeates the snow-cave home: "Many curious metal objects caught the faint light and winked and glowed from the walls like shining teeth" (103). Later, Matthew recognizes these objects as reflectors, taken from military vehicles, hanging from the walls of the room which has been covered with "hundreds of pictures pasted every which way, many of them upside down and on the ceiling . . ." (106). Objects from both White and Inuit cultures decorate this topsy-turvy enclosure: caribou skins, army

blankets, the skull of a bear, and metal grills from freezers (106). A similar mixture of ornamentation is displayed by the wild man, who wears animal teeth around his forehead and several wrist watches, without their hands, on his arms (104, 106). The incongruity and apparent lunacy confronting the two boys are exacerbated by the wild man's perpetual shouting, which appears to be his normal manner of speaking. The atmosphere in the cave is reminiscent of the fantastic, bewildering underground world encountered by Alice in Lewis Carroll's works. In particular, the references to watches and time-keeping recall the Mad Tea Party in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, where the Mad Hatter displays a watch that indicates, not the time of day, but the day of the month. In response to Alice's queries, the Mad Hatter informs her that keeping track of daily time is irrelevant within his world, exclaiming: "'It's always six o'clock now'" (Gardner 99). Houston's allusion to Carroll's work draws attention to the fact that, for the wild man, survival depends on a knowledge of the seasons. To the Inuit people, a twenty-four-hour cycle has no significance in their lives, which are regulated by the natural cycles within the landscape. Martin Gardner, in *The Annotated Alice*, adds a note that is relevant here: "Arthur Stanley Eddington, as well as less distinguished writers on relativity theory, have compared the Mad Tea Party, where it is always six o'clock, with that portion of De Sitter's model of the cosmos in which time stands eternally still" (99). Houston's treatment of time is analogous to this. The wild man's watches, having no hands, allow their wearer to exist in a state in which the passage of time goes undocumented. In addition, Houston renders the wild man's environment a place of cosmic infinity: "In the morning the sky was silver gray. There was no horizon anywhere. The size of every object in the landscape seemed distorted. . . . Everywhere there was an eerie silence" (93).

It should be noted that it is primarily Matthew who has an Alice-like reaction to the wild man and his home. Kayak, however, is able to derive some meaning from the encounter, specifically regarding the watches and their relevance:

> "At first I thought he was crazy," Kayak said. "Now I'm not so sure."

> "He's crazy all right," said Matthew. "Why would he tear the hands off his wrist watches?"
>
> "Maybe he just likes the way they look on his arms . . . I mean, all shiny gold and silver," Kayak said. "We lost the time two days ago when your watch stopped, and now your watch can't find it for you. Why don't you throw it away?" (109-10)

Kayak, somewhat in tune with the wild man's perspective on life, is able to determine which of the things in this menacing landscape are of value. To the Inuit boy, only the objects and knowledge that contribute to survival have any worth when the land threatens impending death. He scorns Matthew's excitement over the gold, retrieving instead a piece of flintstone lying among the gold nuggets (116). At a later date, when this stone saves their lives, it proves that Kayak's evaluation has superiority over the White set of values by which Matthew operates. Throughout their perilous journey, Kayak is essentially the leader, showing Matthew the techniques necessary to remain alive and move through the land. That repeated crises are resolved by the knowledge he has acquired from his father and grandfather, suggests Houston's view that, in this particular landscape, traditional Inuit ways have a value superior to those of the South. While Kayak alludes to various misconceptions and mystical beliefs of his grandfather, Matthew concurs that Inuit teachings take precedence over White education on this occasion: "'He understood the ice. Your grandfather never spent a day in school and yet today he is my teacher'" (123).

Although Inuit ways and values are clearly privileged in this narrative, Houston resolves the plot with symbols that develop an ethos that strives for equality between Inuit and White cultures. Rescue of the boys results from the combined efforts of each one, based on objects and knowledge from their own, very different, backgrounds. With a mirror, Matthew signals a passing airplane, using the international distress code which ensures that the flashing light is not mistaken for a natural phenomenon (135, 137). It is interesting to note that, while this "trick" signifies the culture that is "White," "Southern,"

and "modern" in this narrative, its source is ascribed to an indigenous people: the Arizona Indians (142). This knowledge came to Matthew from his father, just as Kayak's has been passed down from his forebears (135). Kayak's contribution to their rescue is his last-minute, impulsive circling of their shelter with red seal blood, which serves to mark their location for the searching helicopter.

Each boy views the other's unfamiliar actions as some sort of strange magic (135, 139). The helicopter pilot appears to support these views when he explains his luck in finding their location (141-42), yet Houston does not allow human beings to hold unexplained powers that control their environment or their destiny. Instead, he reveals each boy's "magic" as the outcome of knowledge passed down within his own culture. The mystery surrounding the use of the signal mirror and the dead seal exists only in the mind of the boy to whom the object is alien in his own environment. Furthermore, the "magic" utilized by the youths has no impact on the natural world which threatens them. Menace remains in place in the environment as they leave the ice pan in the helicopter: "Matthew felt light-headed as he looked down and watched them rise through the dangerous ice fog. Beneath them spread the deadly puzzle of broken ice widening into dark open water to the south" (142). In this text, Houston preserves mystical, unexplained power exclusively as the purview of the natural world, as evidenced in the actions of the snowy owl which perches on the site where Kayak finds the piece of flintstone that, later, serves to preserve their lives until their rescue (112).

The conclusion of *Frozen Fire* echoes that of *The White Archer*. The boys are deemed to be "brothers" who can amicably unite their inherited backgrounds for mutual benefit although their cultures seem diametrically opposed (145). It is this opposition that Houston addresses. The narrative voice shows concern that, although southern technology can be of value in the arctic landscape, southern ways sometimes prove themselves ludicrous and inappropriate; indeed, they may actually miss the mark in terms of life's real values. Both Matthew's father and the wild man view the Arctic as a place of human

freedom. Ross Morgan exclaims to Matthew: "'This is the place, Matt. Up here a man can call his soul his own'" (22). Although Ross's choice of wild places is clearly tied to dreams of economic wealth, his reluctance to settle in heavily-populated areas denotes an undercurrent of desire for wilderness which can provide the happiness and contentment that the wild man's words express: "'Well, why do smart people like your family still live in a crazy place like Frobisher, crowded with people, like walrus clinging to a tiny rock. Why don't they spread out and hunt, enjoy the country like I do, like all our people used to do?'" (105). The wild man, too, desires the freedom of space, and rejects the inhibiting demands that settlements in the Arctic place on him: "'And they'll start to look for me, 'cause white people can't stand the idea that I and my family are out here living FREE. You hear me? FREE! They'll want to stick needles in my arms and send my children off to schools to learn to be like them instead of me'" (109). The wild man's bellowed rejection of White efforts to change him speaks of the enormous impact that southern culture has had on the Inuit. The dialogue between Matthew and the Australian pilot, Charlie, strikes an uneasy note that illustrates this impact:

> "The poor Eskimos! They've had an awful time of it. Long ago they carefully worked out a way of life as seal hunters and igloo builders in a quiet frozen world."
>
> "Why did they change?" asked Matthew.
>
> "Because suddenly the war came, and we flung a whole new, noisy, crazy world at them, and now we wonder why they have such trouble getting used to it. . . . We are the ones who helped to cause their troubles. No one knows how it'll end." (18)

While Houston's plot ultimately illustrates that each culture has its own worth, it nevertheless strongly depicts White culture as disruptive and displaced in the arctic setting, lacking the essentials necessary for survival in this particular landscape that holds such power over all life.

Throughout Houston's work, kinship between humans and the natural world remains a constant theme. The conjunction of humankind with the landscape results in a fear-filled state of being, in which the external world symbolizes a menacing harbinger of death. Indeed, nature is at times the direct cause of death. Yet, amidst this environment, consistently represented in nightmare terms, it is evident that life is sustained and carried forward. Houston's development of a regenerative site located within the natural world contradicts and overrides the death imagery. His use of gothicism is suggestive of the landscape aesthetics of the eighteenth-century poets, who relied on "exaggerated horrors, wonders, and vastness" to project a powerful, unknowable force operating within nature (Nicolson 333). Houston does not personify or Christianize the natural forces that impact on his characters; however, he does reflect an element of what Nicolson terms an "Aesthetics of the Infinite" (393). He ascribes to nature an awesome, and often terrifying, controlling power that can either destroy life or grandly bestow it. The "Infinite" that he portrays is all-encompassing and as indifferent as "the bone-white face of the watching moon" (*Wolf* 59). An unfathomable force is at work in Houston's Arctic, appearing to be indiscriminate, whimsical, and unpredictable according to familiar laws of reason, yet undeniably present. As a result, his works reflect the ideas of several late eighteenth-century philosophers who were attempting to rationalize theology with the new natural studies gaining prominence at the time. Keith Thomas, in his book, *Man in the Natural World*, quotes David Hume, who wrote of "a blind nature, impregnated by a great vivifying principle, and pouring forth from her lap, without discernment or parental care, her maimed and abortive children" (170). Houston reflects no concept of "maimed children," but his works do symbolically illustrate a "blind nature" at work. Thomas, citing Immanuel Kant, virtually summarizes the pivotal nature of Houston's approach to arctic landscape:

> Man was as much a means as an end: "nature has no more exempted him from its destructive than from its productive forces, nor has it made the

> smallest exception to its subjection of everything to a mechanism of forces devoid of an end." The emerging concept of an ecological system would make obsolete the old language of means and ends. (107)

Houston's spiritual linking of animals and humans denotes a concept of interconnection that ranges back to the eighteenth century, and forward to the environmental and cultural concerns gaining strength in the second half of the twentieth. In his narratives, he privileges life in this environment. Inuit ways and values manage the landscape so that it nurtures life, and nature itself sustains life when all else fails.

Houston's body of work represents the dominant discourse relating to the Arctic that has emerged in children's fiction in the latter half of the twentieth century. The Inuit are no longer portrayed as "poor creatures" in need of White help or White civilization, nor are they made to be "just like you and me, dear reader," as Stefansson and Irwin would have it. Houston's narratives exercise a respectful recognition of difference that offers a concept of integration of diverse characteristics rather than an alteration of them. Arctic landscape is treated in much the same way. The gothicism of Houston's environmental representation insists on the recognition of an indefinable, unknowable power within the land that cannot be eradicated simply by ignoring it, or by forcefully attempting to subdue it. Houston, like Ballantyne, never loses sight of the dangers that constitute the effort for survival in the northern land; however, he represents them in such a way that they become an accepted part of life, to be respected and acknowledged as forces, albeit mysterious ones, amidst which life must be lived.

Other writers in this era have similar thematic perspectives to Houston's. Farley Mowat's contribution to this genre consists of two related works: *Lost in the Barrens*, and its sequel, *The Curse of the Viking Grave*. The stories qualify as adventure tales, relating the difficulties encountered by youthful travellers as they move through the Barren Lands, struggling to stay alive. Like Houston, Mowat juxtaposes terrifying characteristics of the

landscape with detailed information regarding techniques for survival within the forbidding environment.

Mowat's two works are sometimes compared with Houston's *Frozen Fire* and its two sequels, *Black Diamonds* and *Ice Swords*, primarily because both authors deal with contemporary times, setting Native and White teen-agers together in the arctic landscape. It is worth noting that *Lost in the Barrens* appeared in 1956, nine years before Houston's first work for children, *Tikta'Liktak*. *Curse of the Viking Grave* (1966) preceded Houston's *Frozen Fire* by eleven years. These publishing dates deserve attention, for they suggest a turning point in arctic discourse. While both authors write of reconciliation between human differences, they treat human place within the northern landscape in subtly different ways.

Mowat's discourse, particularly in *Lost in the Barrens*, carries overtones of the imagery that characterizes works produced in the early part of the century. Landscape features emphasize the "puny strength of man" (*Lost* 45), much as they did in Ballantyne's works, for example. Mowat's frequent references to "an alien world" promote a notion that human beings do not belong in the northern landscape: "'It looks like the end of the world,' Jamie said 'Or, maybe like the moon'" (*Lost* 130). At the heart of *Lost in the Barrens* is the lesson that the White youth, Jamie, learns regarding the key to survival in arctic wilderness. His Indian friend, Awasin, explains: "'If you fight against the spirits of the north you will always lose. Obey their laws and they'll look after you'" (219). Like Murray and Rokeby-Thomas, Mowat sets "land spirits" within the environment where they enforce their powers over human beings. The Inuit people who rescue the boys demonstrate how to understand the spirits in order to co-operate with them and thereby survive. Absent in this narrative, but appearing in *Curse of the Viking Grave*, is the concept of a spiritual link between humans and the natural world.

In his second work, Mowat introduces shamanism in the context of a clash between Inuit and White beliefs. An Inuit shaman, citing natural signs as indicators of disfavor among the spirits, warns Jamie against making his journey through the northern wilderness

(162). During the trip, Jamie, who initially refuses to believe in spirits, admits his skeptical acceptance of spiritual powers operating in the landscape when a fierce storm attacks the adventuring party (178). Ultimately, near the conclusion of the story, he achieves a genuine spiritual feeling of affinity with the natural world when a large herd of caribou overtakes and surrounds him:

> His fear began to evaporate, to be replaced by a strange exitement [*sic*] and by a feeling of awe such as he had never known before. So much tumultuous life swirling past him, unhurried and unafraid, stirred him to his inner being. A feeling of affinity, almost of love, for these magnificent, imperturbable animals swelled through him. When the herd had passed by he remained standing as if entranced, staring after them until they were far away. (189)

Peetyuk, Jamie's Inuit friend, expresses the notion of spiritual unity between humans and the natural world that the White youth has just experienced: "'You feel it, Jamie? The Spirit of the Deer. Now you know how Eskimo feel about *tuktu*. *Tuktu* give Eskimo his life. *Tuktu*, he is our brother'" (189). Jamie's recognition of his own kinship with the environment represents an authorial validation of Inuit spiritual philosophy; furthermore, it suggests a shift in Mowat's perspective regarding the place of human beings within the natural world. In *Lost in the Barrens*, the human species is juxtaposed with nature, but is apart from it. The second work depicts humans as constituting one of many species who share the same spiritual essence of life that permeates the natural world. This depiction echoes the writings of Charles G.D. Roberts, at the same time suggesting the philosophy embedded in Houston's works.

Julie of the Wolves, by Jean Craighead George, subscribes to much of the thematic thrust in the works of Mowat and Houston, particularly with regard to human kinship with the natural world. However, the text, published in 1972, stands out in this period of publishing for its outcry against White cultural encroachment into the Arctic. The author,

an American, points directly at "American civilization" as the destructive force within the Inuit land (130). Julie (also referred to by her Inuit name of Miyax), is a thirteen-year-old Inuit who successfully makes her way alone across the tundra utilizing traditional Inuit knowledge and methods for living within the land. Her survival is directly attributable to the relationships she develops with a wolf pack.

George presents Julie's integration with the natural world in tones that are reminiscent of the romantic discourse found in earlier works:

> Her ulo and needles and matches were more important to find. . . . With them she could make a home, a larder, a sled, and clothes. And the cold air was equally precious. With it she could, like her father, freeze leather and sinew into sleds, spears, and harpoons. She would not die here if she could find her ulo and needles. . . . The old Eskimos were scientists too. By using the plants, animals and temperature, they had changed the harsh Arctic into a home, a feat as incredible as sending rockets to the moon. She smiled. The people at seal camp had not been as outdated and old-fashioned as she had been led to believe. No, on the contrary, they had been wise. They had adjusted to nature instead of to man-made gadgets. (120-21)

Julie manages her existence on the land quite comfortably, perceiving herself to be part of the natural rhythms of an ordered universe: "Out here she understood how she fitted into the scheme of the moon and stars and the constant rise and fall of life on the earth. Even the snow was part of her, she melted it and drank it" (130).

This text stands apart in its high degree of antipathy exhibited toward White culture. Lemmings and their crazed deaths, used here to symbolize both the natural world and Inuit culture, are described in the early pages of the story. From a school teacher Julie learns that, "when there are too many [lemmings], they grow nervous at the sight of each other. Somehow this shoots too much antifreeze [a natural chemical] into their bloodstreams and it begins to poison them. They become restless, then crazy. They run in a frenzy until they

die" (13). In effect, the lemmings are the agents of their own destruction. Julie's story illustrates White civilization as a "poison" that kills in the natural world, and, furthermore, destroys the Inuit relationship with the land. In a dramatic episode, when hunters, shooting from an airplane, kill her wolf companion, Julie equates civilization with death:

> The air exploded and she stared up into the belly of the plane. Bolts, doors, wheels, red, white, silver, and black, the plane flashed before her eyes. In that instant she saw great cities, bridges, radios, school books. She saw the pink room, long highways, TV sets, telephones, and electric lights. Black exhaust enveloped her, and civilization became this monster that snarled across the sky. (141)

Eventually, Julie discovers that civilization has "poisoned" her father, Kapugen, transforming him into one of the destructive forces in the land: he has become a pilot for flying hunters (168). As such, he has become, like the lemmings, an agent of his own destruction. While still a young child, Julie had learned from him that wolves, as "gentle brothers" of the people (15), constitute an essential link in the chain of life on the tundra:

> Kapugen considered the bounty the gussaks' [Whites'] way of deciding that the amaroqs [wolves] could not live on this earth anymore. "And no men have that right," he would say. "When the wolves are gone there will be too many caribou grazing the grass and the lemmings will starve. Without the lemmings the foxes and birds and weasels will die. Their passing will end smaller lives upon which even man depends, whether he knows it or not, and the top of the world will pass into silence." (134)

By helping hunters kill the wolves, Kapugen participates in acts which he himself knows will bring about the eventual collapse of the complete arctic ecosystem, of which he is a part.

Julie's distress with her father's transformation turns her once again toward the land, where her future is foretold: "The hour of the lemming was upon the land, cycling

slowly toward the hour of Miyax" (169). She sings a song of lament that concludes with her acceptance of her fate and that of her people: "'the hour of the wolf and the Eskimo is over'" (170).

Significantly, no integration of cultures occurs in this narrative. The voice of despair predominates, depicting the natural world as a form of paradise in which the essence of life is being destroyed. The text reflects the ecological and environmental concerns that begin to gain strength throughout North America in the 1970s. Its frightening tone, warning of dire consequences resulting from heedless human attitudes toward the natural world, entirely contradicts the early twentieth-century discourse that placed humankind within the northern landscape as masterful inhabitants, confidently assured of survival and success. Julie demonstrates that success is possible, but only through a humbler attitude that acknowledges the equality of humankind with other living species.

An even stronger statement to this effect appears in *Crow and Weasel*, a work by Barry Lopez published in 1990. A cumulation of the thematic discourse dominating the decades from 1950, the narrative stresses the inseparability of humans, animals, and the natural environment. Simple and familiar, the narrative follows two young men, armed with bows and knives, who leave their home camp on horseback to travel farther north than any of their people have ever been. They pass through alien landscapes, suffer from near-starvation, encounter a race of beings never heard of by their own kind, and make their way home again to tell of the wonders they have seen. The framework of the narrative is the epic heroic quest of antiquity.

Crow and Weasel is a myth-like work which must be considered in conjunction with its illustrations, produced by Tom Pohrt. The work cannot be regarded as a picture-book, in which illustrations carry the textual story; however, its pictorial content provides graphic detail for the theme of naturalism which is more subtly conveyed in the text. Crow and Weasel, the two youths of the story, are visually portrayed as the animals of their

names, but are clothed in the accouterment of northern Plains Indians. Other animate beings who have voices and personalities are similarly visually represented, although Badger, a speaking character like Crow and Weasel, is unclothed.[10] Only the Inuit appear pictorially as human beings. However, the text refers to all who have voices, including the trees, as "people" and "men" (15). Only briefly are the two youths textually made both animal and human-like in the same instance. On the homeward journey Crow observes "that Weasel's winter hair was beginning to come in" (49).[11]

The spirits permeating the world of the youths constitute both the exterior and interior landscapes of all the beings in the story. Crow initiates his communication with the trees, who he knows are "beings," by ceremonially hailing with his pipe "in the four directions and to the spirits above and below"; this act indicates that the spirit world he addresses is all-encompassing. In addition, the spirits constitute a part of himself, as he reveals by referring to them as "my relatives" and "our fathers and mothers." The tree spirits, speaking with one voice, delineate their constitutional composition; they receive nourishment from the earth; have a method of communication between their own kind and with other elements in the natural world; hold as valuable the acquisition of wisdom; and are respectful of other living things (14-15). These aspects also appear, in various representations, within the animate beings of Mouse, Badger, Grizzly Bear, and the Inuit.

Grizzly Bear offers a philosophical foundation for the spiritual kinship existing in the natural world by recounting an experience of his own. Once, near death, he grasped the concept of beauty in the sight of geese flying against the face of the sun. His urge for life renewed by the vision, he had the strength to hunt an animal, whose life he "accepted" so that he could carry on. The aspect of "beauty" is the key to Grizzly Bear's philosophy: "'It can carry you to the end. It is your relationship to what is beautiful, not the beautiful thing by itself, that carries you'" (55). Following Grizzly Bear's words, the text describes the scene:

> The clouds hanging before the sun had turned indigo underneath and were glowing a soft rose above. The light fell differently on each one of them. The side of Crow's head gleamed like obsidian. Weasel's fur glowed like freshly fallen snow. Grizzly Bear's coat glimmered like water, a dazzling mixture of gold and red, of yellow and brown and silver light. The eyes of each one, despite the weakness of the two riders, seemed as if lit from within. (55-56)

In this passage, the narrative is explicit that these three beings are different species of animals, each with their own unique physical virtues, who have the same inner, spiritual "light." It is the complete entity--physical body and inner spirit--that constitutes "beauty," according to Grizzly Bear. Kinship between living things exists in the spiritual realm, not merely in the physical reality.

Realistically, the animals of the story could be natural enemies; however, their spiritual bonds of fellowship emphasize uniformity and equality, which serve to exclude any possibility that the individuals involved would visualize each other as prey. Lopez utilizes a similar concept in his portrayal of the interaction between Crow and Weasel, and the Inuit. The two youths, representing one category of "people," exchange information with the Inuit regarding cultural differences and similarities (40-43). Although the initial meeting is fraught with fear and antagonism, the two groups of "people" ultimately arrive at an understanding of the other's way of life. Crow and Weasel, in particular, are aware of bonds of kinship with the Inuit: "They were pleased to see, also, that the Inuit expressed gratitude for what they received, and that they thanked their food animals" (41). Crow and Weasel, in their role as representatives of another culture, recognize in the Inuit a similarity to their own attitude toward the natural world. As animals themselves, the youths respond to the acknowledgement that their kind significantly contributes to the survival of the Inuit people. Lopez structures this meeting between the two "cultures" to portray both the

spiritual bonds linking humans with animals, and the amicable acceptance of difference that is Houston's theme.

During their journey, Crow and Weasel experience several different types of landscape, each of which elicits emotional and spiritual responses from the youths. The site of their home camp is represented as a pastoral land of peace and plenty, where they feel securely confident in their abilities to complete their quest for wisdom. However, once they have crossed the Floating Ashes river, they initially meet each new, unfamiliar territory with fear.

The forest is particularly threatening for the two travellers: "They were without a clear view of the sky, and being hemmed in like this made them uneasy and the horses irritable. The silence of the open prairie did not disturb them like this silence, which was oppressive and somehow threatening" (12-13). Their fear is born of the inability to know what surrounds them. Crow turns to the tree spirits with humility, requesting advice and guidance in dealing with the strange environment. With help from the spirits, the confidence of the youths is restored, and the two carry on, following a bird who the spirits have indicated will guide their way.

Beyond the forest, Crow and Weasel enter the tundra, which appears familiar at first glance simply because it has no trees. However, the youths soon discover that this land differs from that which surrounds their home: "They were glad to be in open country again, even if the grasses and the flowers looked strange. The land had a deep emptiness to it that both of them could feel. They wondered if it was the empty feeling a place would have where people had never been, not a bad feeling, just new and strange" (21-22). Unlike the sublime and threatening vastness that dominates Houston's works, empty, unlimited space in this text evokes emotional feelings of affinity in the travellers. However, Crow and Weasel approach the "strange" elements in the land with some trepidation, chiefly because they lack the knowledge to gain sustenance from this specific environment. Their success in learning how to function under new conditions rests in their

acceptance of difference: "'I've never seen country like this," said Weasel. "I am tempted to say it is like this or like that, but, truly, it is only like itself'" (22). Careful study of the differences inherent in this new world helps the youths learn to read signs in the environment which lead to food. As a result, this landscape does not engender feelings of alienation, although it remains an uninviting prospect in their view: "Toward midday they stopped on a ridge that gave them a good view in all directions. Sitting there, they agreed that no people could live easily in such a land" (33).

On the return journey, Crow and Weasel retrace their steps through landscapes that are now familiar to them. Neither the tundra nor the forest is fearful to the travellers because these areas are no longer unknown. Although the youths move through the land in harmony with the natural world, the text does not imply that they have achieved a perfected state of being that provides a completely safe passage. Confidence becomes arrogance, and the two young men are reduced to starvation for lack of animals to hunt. Weasel must humble himself and atone in prayer for his affront to the spirits:

> "The Ones Who Live Above, hear me. My relatives, hear me. My heart is sad over this terrible thing I have done. Have pity on me. I am here before you without my clothes, the protection against the cold that the animals have given me. I beg you to hear my prayer, to accept my expression of humility and sorrow. I promise you that I will never again act as though I expected the land to feed me. I will remind myself, always, that this is a gift, to be fed and clothed and protected from the weather by the animals is a gift. I will remember it. And I will always return something to the animals, as long as I live. Please hear my prayer. My relatives, please, help me. Ones Living Above, see the sorrow in my heart." (52-53)

Weasel's prayer, representing the voice of both animals and humans, stresses the primary theme of the work: one survives only through a humble recognition of the spirits in the land that can bestow or withdraw the means for survival.

Dangerous forces--not identified as "spirits"--also operate in the environment to beset the two young men on their homeward trip. While crossing the Floating Ashes river on the outward journey, Crow feels a mysterious force pulling at him under the water (19). This event foretells his near-drowning on the return crossing, when the ice on the now-frozen river collapses, the river's current threatening to pull him underneath the ice (57). The youths confer regarding the inexplicable tugging, concluding that it is one of life's events that is never to be understood, but must be accepted. Crow attempts an interpretation: "'I think what it was saying to me was this: with some things in life you don't try to fight. A young man wants to fight everything, it is in him to do that. A grown man knows to leave certain things alone. Some things you don't answer'" (19). Crow's understanding that some things about the world must remain mysterious demonstrates humility with regard to his environment. To refrain from seeking an answer is to accept the fact that some forces within the land will not be mastered. Weasel's lesson regarding over-confidence in his hunting ability is a similar concept: mastery over the animal world is a delusion that can only lead to destruction.

When Crow and Weasel arrive home at the end of their journey, Mountain Lion, the village leader, indicates that Crow will permanently retain the medicine pipe he carried on the trip, while Weasel will receive the travelling bundle of his people to hang in his lodge (60-61). These objects represent the collective kinship that exists between the people and the spirit world of animals and land. That the younger generation now possesses both the power and wisdom to guard this relationship signifies perpetuation of life, for it is only with a humble, respectful attitude toward the spirits that life can continue. The story of Crow and Weasel tells of the formulation of the youths' spiritual natures through the acquisition of knowledge and the establishment of spiritual relationships with other beings, and with the natural world: "In the silence that followed, Weasel said very softly, 'It is good to be alive. To have friends, to have a family, to have children, to live in a particular place. These relationships are sacred'" (63).

Lopez represents the tundra landscape as a site where wisdom can be found. There is an ecosystem in place on the earth, of which human beings are an inseparable part. The northern landscape, which Crow and Weasel visit, provides an opportunity to experience and observe a portion of the earth's system in operation. Observation and study produces "wisdom," or lessons, which can be transferred and applied to modes of life within other, different landscapes. *Crow and Weasel* fundamentally provides a culmination of the major themes appearing in the dominant discourse of children's fiction set in the arctic landscape that has been produced since the 1950s. Authors participating in this discourse illustrate a multiplicity of relationships among humans, animals and spiritual elements in the environment; however, they do not attempt explicit definitions or explanations of the nature of these bonds. Thus the discourse of the latter half of the century actively works to insert the concept of mystery into the natural world, at the same time exorcising the old notion that humankind can achieve mastery over the forces of nature.

B. THE INUIT VOICE

This study of landscape representation has thus far focussed primarily on White discourse. An examination of children's fiction for the purpose of analyzing the Inuit perspective regarding the natural world is thwarted to varying degrees by White cultural influence that is present from the outset. In her work, *Canadian Inuit Literature: The Development of a Tradition*, Robin McGrath traces the development of Inuit prose in written form, noting that not only translation of an oral tale, but transcription as well, is influenced by the cultural background of the writer (12-24). Thus, a search for subtext and symbolism regarding landscape in Inuit text that results from European recording must remain hypothetical to a large degree. In modern times, McGrath states, very few Inuit writers have produced stories that are "deliberately fiction," in which material within the narratives is "invented" by authors themselves (81). Furthermore, she observes, "the authors of modern Inuit stories are usually quite aware of the influence of European literature on their stories. . . . " Nevertheless, in spite of the obvious perils in dealing with text that may be overcast by another culture, it is important to recognize that an Inuit voice is present in the evolving literary discourse regarding arctic landscape in children's fiction.

Several of the works already discussed in this study have included incidents of Inuit song-creation and story-telling, the authors inserting the text of the tale or song within the framework of the larger story. In *Kak*, a story-telling competition involves the tale of a hunter who takes as his wife a woman who was once a snow goose (118-24). Underlying the story, which focusses on the interchangeability of people and animals, is the theme of human involvement with the natural world. A man whose "strong magic" forms part of the plot carves the shapes of sea animals from wood, then tosses them into the water where they take life: "He made all the swimming things on the flesh of which men live, and the hunter watched him" (122). This short insert is a type of creation story, as is a tale in *Ook-Pik*, which relates how the first clouds formed in the sky when a hunter outsmarted a

hungry bear by inducing him to drink so much water that he exploded into a cloud of steam (79-80). The stories in *Ningiyuk's Igloo World* and *In the Track of the Huskies* reflect a similar thematic concern for human relationships with the environment.

Because these tales interweave personal and ancestral history, social values, and survival techniques with human perspectives toward the natural world, it is worth noting the tone the narrator of the whole work uses with respect to the tale itself. In *Kak*, Stefansson and Irwin end a story-telling session with an explanation: "Kamik finished abruptly, yet her audience seemed quite satisfied; for when Eskimos come to the end of their yarns they stop, without bothering to add our traditional phrase: 'And they lived happy ever after'" (124). The term, "yarns," and the reference to European folktale tradition, serve to dismiss the content of the story as mere entertainment. Crisp's treatment of the tale in *Ook-Pik* is similar, for he entitles the chapter containing the story "A Fairy Tale" (77). In *In the Track of the Huskies*, Lillian Murray is somewhat more subtle in displacing the Inuit voice. When Orlak completes his tale of the hunter and his seal wife, Ginnie becomes the center of attention: "When Orlak had finished his story, the children crowded round Niksun [Ginnie] begging her to tell them a story--a children's story" (147). Ginnie relates the story of Cinderella, altering it by inserting elements of Inuit culture to make it understandable to the Inuit youngsters. Thus the main character is a hunter's daughter, transformed out of rags into beautiful furs by her "animal spirit," a white fox. Ultimately, the daughter is discovered by a rich young hunter who falls in love with her at a drum-dance. Ginnie concludes: "And she went away with him and lived happily ever after" (156). Although these authors include material that reflects Inuit culture, they override the substance of the tales by imposing the discourse of their own literary projects. In this process, they also impose their own concepts of the natural world on those of the Inuit.

Some children's fiction exhibits purposeful attempts to present the Inuit voice and perspective. Between 1940 and 1956, Anauta, an Inuit woman raised on Baffin Island,

produced three related works based on memories of her childhood. The books are jointly written by herself and Heluiz Washburne, an American woman whom she met while residing in the United States.[12] As McGrath notes, the narratives mix White and Inuit discourse, making it difficult to state with any reliability that landscape representation reflects an Inuit view (85).

Wild Like the Foxes is a fictionalized account of the childhood of Anauta's mother, Alea. The textual representation of Alea and her home mirrors the romantic and picturesque descriptions evident in *Ningiyuk's Igloo World*:

> Alea stood quietly on the shore. It was late fall, always heavy with fog. The quack of the eider ducks was near, yet the birds themselves were not visible in their shelter of thick weather. The cry of sea gulls echoed eerily as they dove for bits of fish or mussels spewed up by seals or whales. The smell of salty seaweed was everywhere. Alea heard the splash of a seal, safe now in its cover of fog and snow. How she loved it all! (48-49)

Although the sun is not the focus here, Alea responds emotionally to the abundance of life and the sensory aspects of the environment, just as Ningiyuk did. The site of the trading post is depicted in terms that, although more brief, almost duplicate the picturesque representation of Fort Hope in Burnham's *Jack Ralston,* written in 1903 (27):

> The trading post was a pretty place with its two white wooden buildings built on a smooth, flat grassy meadow. Back of the houses was a mountain of gray rock, towering high up as if to form a majestic background for this quiet place. The foreground stretched down to the sandy shore where the boat was now landing. (*Wild* 40)

These examples of landscape representation are so like the works which have been examined in the early chapters of this study that it is nearly impossible to view them in any other way than as the result of influences by White cultural discourse, whether written by Anauta herself or contributed by Washburne.

However, a belief in spirits connected with the natural world, which does emerge in the text, resembles samples of Inuit stories found in other works. The northern lights provide one example: "'Ahaila,' Eskimo mothers told their children, 'that is put there by the good spirit so we can find the great Nanook or hunt the toktu. It is there to help the Innuit, Eskimo people, when the great cold comes and the days are dark. Ah-huh, that is good,' and the children felt no fear" (148-49). That this paragraph constitutes the only part of the narrative that attempts to present Inuit verbal expressions suggests that the concepts conveyed are faithful to Anauta's cultural heritage, at least as she remembers it. There is a similar passage in *Children of the Blizzard,* which relates events in Anauta's own childhood, although, as explained in her introduction, she has represented herself as a small boy named Salumo. In a chapter headed "The Good Shadows," the people greet the northern lights with delight, for they provide visibility for hunting and travelling when the sun no longer shines. A moral code of conduct weaves into the spiritual nature of the northern lights, which constitute visible evidence of "the Good Spirit." One must be kind and good, and help others, in order to please the "Good Spirit." If one violates this code, the "Good Spirit" may send punishment in the form of dark days, blizzards, or scarce animals, which will affect the land and all the people in it (45). This belief affords the Inuit a way to understand their relationship with the natural world, and, in addition, offers the opportunity to have some control over it.

Children of the Blizzard recounts the events that take place in Salumo's life through the seasons from one winter to the next. Unlike *Kak,* this account details, quite unemotionally, the hardships, dangers, and almost continual hunger of the Inuit people as they hunt for food in various sites as the seasons dictate. Their survival depends upon physical strength, communal sharing, and the accumulated wisdom of an old woman named Oomialik. Underlying the narrative is a subtext that conveys an acceptance of this harsh life. During a stormy period, when the seas are too rough for fishing, and hunting is impossible, the people grow hungry and cold; but when the storm abates, masses of fish,

tossed up by the huge waves of the sea, are found on the shore. With gratitude, Oomialik declares: "Out of the great storm the sea gives us food" (148). In her attitude there is no suggestion of anxiety or despair that her life, and the survival of her people, are so dependent on the whims of nature. Contentment pervades at the close of a chapter that recounts the birth of a baby in the camp. The narrator remarks that the day had brought "a new life, a safe journey, a seal to eat, and the comfort of a safe home" (118). That this is only a temporary cessation of cares is clear when the text carries on to tell of further dangers faced by the people as the cycle of their lives continues.

Hardship in the struggle for survival is also the theme of Markoosie's *Harpoon of the Hunter*, which first appeared, in Inuit syllabics, in *Inuttituut* magazine. In 1967 Markoosie began work on the story, which was ultimately published in book form, in English, in 1970. A contemporary Inuit writer, born in 1941 in northern Quebec, Markoosie himself produced the translated version of his narrative, which is a story he heard in childhood.[13] The work is regarded as "the first novel by a Canadian Eskimo" (McGrath 81), chiefly because its length extends beyond most retellings of Inuit legends and stories, and because Markoosie himself has inserted description and dialogue that are produced from his own imagination. However, Markoosie states that the essence of the story has not been altered: "The struggle was the same, the hardship they faced, and the things they had to do--[that] doesn't change" (Lium 78). Marie Lium, in her thesis introduction, addresses the issue of the fictional nature of the work:

> Whether he is the first Inuit novelist depends on point of view. To Markoosie, the story of Kamik in *Harpoon of the Hunter* is oral history, a story told to him by his parents and grandparents as having been true. Markoosie calls it "a fact and a fiction" because the story, he says, is true but he had to find English equivalents for Inuit words and ideas that would not translate directly. (5)

The importance of the story, for the purposes of this study, rests in the fact that an Inuit writer has presented the material in the narrative in words of his own choosing.

Markoosie tells of Kamik, an Inuit youth not yet considered a full-fledged hunter, struggling for survival after all the members of his hunting party have been slain by a polar bear. The animal, known to be rabid, presents a threat to all creatures in the land, including the people whose livelihood depends upon the health and abundance of animal life. Kamik consistently renews his will to live through his hold on a mental image of his mother (42). He also clings to the idea of hope, expressed by his friend, Soonah: "There is always a chance as long as we are alive" (32). Although the other hunters have died, Kamik knows that survival, for him, lies ahead, within the community and family that still exists in his home camp.

The story has all the appearance of a successful survival story when Kamik, having killed the rabid bear, is rescued by a search party and returns to his community, where he meets a young Inuit girl to whom he becomes attached. However, there is no happy ending. Kamik's community, now bereft of its hunters, cannot survive alone; consequently, the decision is made to move the remaining members across a strait of dangerous ice to join another camp. During the channel crossing, the ice cracks, throwing Kamik's mother, together with his future wife and her family, into the water to be lost beneath the ice. Adrift on an ice pan, Kamik observes the safe crossing of the other people, and contemplates his own loss. Although safety is within his reach, he chooses to remain on the ice, ending his own life with the harpoon at his throat.

Kamik's story, although ending with his suicide, is one of survival. The danger of rabies sweeping through the land, destroying the animal life and hence all those who depend on it, is averted with the killing of the bear. The remnants of Kamik's community will be able to carry on by joining forces with the neighboring camp. Furthermore, the end of Kamik's life is represented, not as an unhappy cessation of being, but as a change in mode of existence. Early in the story, Kamik's father, Suluk, spoke to him while dying

from a bear attack: "'I shall rest forever in the peace which only dead people find. Someday you will find such peace, Kamik. I'll be waiting for you and for our people there'" (19). Kamik's thoughts are similar as he kneels on the ice pan: "'Before my father died, he said only dead people find everlasting peace. He said he was going where there was peace. And he said he would wait for me.' Kamik looked at the harpoon in his hands. Now the time had come. Now was the time to find peace, and to find the family and people he loved" (81). Kamik's desire for death, contradictory as it may seem, is similar to the concept that contributed to his will to survive earlier in the story. It is the urge to maintain contact with family and loved ones. His choice of suicide is based on a belief in the continuation of existence on a spiritual plane.

The concept of death that Markoosie presents, through Suluk's words and Kamik's thoughts, comprises a place of "peace" and "rest," away from the continual demand for excessive effort to maintain life within the northern environment. Kamik's mother, Ooramik, voices the same notion to her friend, Toogak:

> As she chewed on the meat, she said, "Why does life have to be so hard? Are we going to struggle forever for survival? Sometimes I think I would be better off dead."
>
> "Don't say that, Ooramik. Who knows? Maybe things will change some day."
>
> "That is just a dream, Toogak."
>
> "But sometimes dreams come true."
>
> "Not in my life." (36-37)

Kamik, too, voices hope for an easing of the hardships faced in living in this landscape. As his friend lies dying in his arms, Kamik comforts him: "'The people and the country will be saved as long as there are men like you in the land, Soonah. . . . If I get out of this alive, I will try to be like you. I will do my part in taming this country'" (36).

The Inuit voice in *Harpoon of the Hunter* and *Children of the Blizzard*, although overlaid by White culture to various degrees, presents a perception of landscape, and humankind's relationship to it, not from an outsider's perspective, but from that of people who inhabit it as their ancestral home. Neither of these authors allows the harsh realities of survival to be disregarded. As Kamik observes in *Harpoon of the Hunter*, "To survive in this wild land, man and beast kill for food. This is the land where the strong survive. The weak do not survive" (12). Markoosie's perspective is somewhat like the nineteenth-century British view, in which the land is perceived to be an enemy to be conquered. In his interview with Lium, Markoosie expresses this concept: "'I also knew for thousands of years the Eskimo had survived bitter land and fought starvation, sickness, nature, and had won, and I would too'" (78). The notion of battling the landscape is tempered, however, in Anauta's discourse, as it is in Houston's. While both Anauta and Markoosie portray their Inuit characters as having some desire to control elements in the landscape, Salumo's people, in *Children of the Blizzard*, attempt to conform to the wishes of the "Good Spirit" in order to achieve a mode of living that is in harmony with the natural world. Above all, the Inuit voice expresses a determination to survive within the physical realities of a landscape where the dangers are recognized and understood as constituent parts of daily life. The ever-threatening forces in the land, whether viewed as basic physical realities, or personified as spirits, are never contained or rendered benign.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The perception of arctic landscape, as it is represented in children's fiction, has undergone significant changes since the beginning of the nineteenth century. In the early 1800s, at a time when arctic exploration was being undertaken with determination and imperial enthusiasm, the matter-of-fact voice of reportage dominated literary efforts to describe scenes that had never been experienced or even imagined by most of those who stayed at home. An era in which scientific study and discovery were held in great esteem, the first decades of the nineteenth century produced a literary climate in which there was a social pressure at work on the authors of exploration literature to adopt scientific language in their descriptions of the sights and adventures experienced by northern explorers. Coinciding with this demand for unembellished fact in exploration literature was the belief that children needed realism and moral teaching in their reading materials. The dominant social climate, therefore, renders the production of children's books that incorporate the narrative style of arctic travel journals an unsurprising outcome of the era.

By the end of the nineteenth century, the British had come to terms with the loss of the Franklin expedition, as Loomis observes (112). With renewed vigour, British adventurers, joined by those from America as well as other countries, revived the desire to conquer and control the Arctic. The discourse of adventure exhibits confidence, at the turn of the century, in the ability of humankind to accomplish this subjugation of the land. In addition, the exaggerations of the romantic and sublime literary conventions, common at the end of the century, help to extol the heroism involved in mastery of the northern wilderness.

The first decades of the twentieth century produced a discourse in children's fiction that actively removes any mystery or magic that may have lingered in the imagery of landscape up to this point. Authors undertook to illustrate that the barren northern

wilderness was no longer a fearful, unknowable region. The writers of animal stories, however, did not altogether relinquish mystery where it concerned the natural world. Although intent on portraying realistic details, and thus participating in the discourse that renders the environment understandable, they offered a variation on the dominant literary rhetoric by reinserting mystery with regard to animal and human existence in the landscape. The naturalists portray human beings dominating the landscape; however, their works suggest an alternative perspective that insists on the recognition of an indefinable bond between the natural world and humankind.

While the genre of naturalistic animal stories has declined in popularity since the middle of the twentieth century (Egoff, *New Republic* 101), its legacy can be observed in the works of Houston and other authors writing in the late 1900s. The literary voice of the naturalists has evolved into a discourse that emphasizes both a physical and spiritual bond between humans and the natural world.

It is important to note that the voices producing arctic discourse in children's fiction are predominantly those of White cultural backgrounds, the Inuit voice only emerging in the late 1900s, and sporadically at that. The Inuit discourse admits no notion of the Romantic or the Sublime in arctic landscape; rather, it speaks of the desire to survive within a harsh environment through land management, acceptance of the ways of nature, and conformation to what is locally believed to be required by nature.

The evolution of arctic discourse in literature for young readers, throughout its history, reveals that human beings seek a way to manage the landscape so that it will nourish and sustain life. Garnet Hewitt, in *Ytek and the Arctic Orchid*, introduces his retelling of an Inuit legend with the following description of shamanism, perhaps the best idiom in which to define the acts of taming that arctic discourse has both portrayed and performed in regard to landscape:

> Ytek was the only son of an aging Inuit shaman named Owljut. As shaman, Owljut was the hunting and spiritual leader of one Inuit camp. Too

> old and weak to lead the hunt now, Owljut was training Ytek to take his place. It was not usual to have so young a shaman, for Ytek was only twelve years of age, but custom required that Owljut must hand down his power and responsibility to his son.
>
> Becoming a shaman would bring Ytek a great deal of honour. But it would also bring a great deal of responsibility and hard work. Much training would be required. Owljut would instruct Ytek in the ways of nature and the hunting skills needed for the camp's survival. He would also teach his son the secrets of the Inuit spirits, so that his leadership would be wise and respectful of nature.
>
> Ytek's most important task in becoming a shaman would be to conquer a Tornrak--a wild spirit. A Tornrak appears often in the form of an animal or bird, sometimes small, sometimes larger than life. If fought and tamed, this spirit would guide and protect Ytek through his difficult tasks as a shaman. (2)

Like the Tornrak, the wild spirit of arctic landscape has been portrayed both picturesquely small, and sublimely larger than the human mind can comprehend. Yet, ultimately, it has been tamed so that its projected image is of a spirit that permits, and even encourages, the perpetuation of life within its spaces.

Arctic discourse, as it has emerged in children's fiction, exhibits the development of a basic language pertaining to the relationship between human beings and the natural world. In the latter half of the twentieth century this language has become part of a shared literacy that recognizes no political boundaries; nor is it confined to arctic landscape alone. Arctic discourse speaks of human attitudes which, if respectful toward the natural world, will contribute to the perpetuation of life. As demonstrated by Lopez's text, the survival lessons that the northern landscape provides, conveyed as they are in arctic discourse, can

be transferred to other types of landscape, offering the hopeful view that humankind, with care and respect for the natural world, will be able to continue to exist on earth.

NOTES

1 Sheila Egoff, in her preface to the first edition of *The Republic of Childhood*, discusses the difficulties of defining a "children's book." She puts the issue to rest by stating: "In the true sense a children's book is simply one in which a child finds pleasure" (*Republic* 9-10).

2 See, for example, the works by Sheila Egoff, and the resource guide produced by the British Columbia Work Group.

3 For a discussion of the use of the Picturesque and the Sublime in arctic narratives, see Loomis, and I. S. MacLaren, "The Aesthetic Mapping."

4 For a discussion of the characteristics and historical development of the Picturesque and the Sublime, see, for example, Walter John Hipple.

5 For the original description in Franklin's work, see the published account of his second expedition, pages 35 and 36.

6 Loomis illustrates his point with a quotation from Parry's account that is worth reproducing here, for it appears in various forms elsewhere in fictional works:

> Not an object was to be seen on which the eye could long rest with pleasure, unless when directed to the spot where the ships lay, and where our little colony was planted. The smoke which there issued from the several fires, affording a certain indication of the presence of man, gave a partial cheerfulness to this part of the prospect; and the sound of voices, which, during the cold weather, could be heard at a much greater distance than usual, served now and then to break the silence that reigned around us, a silence far different from that peaceable composure which characterizes the

landscape of a cultivated country; it was the deathlike stillness of the most dreary desolation, and the total absence of animated existence. (102)

7 See Henty's *With Wolfe in Canada*, Marryat's *The Settlers in Canada*, and Kipling's *Captains Courageous*.

8 See, for example, Henry Ellis, page 235.

9 Ballantyne is participating in the philosophical and theological arguments surrounding the conventions of "the noble savage," a phrase first used by John Dryden, in his *Conquest of Granada*, in 1672. Voltaire's *L'Ingénu*, appearing in 1767, is an example of these conventions, which were also used by Jean-Jacques Rousseau in the development of his doctrine of the "natural man." Notably, James Fenimore Cooper, in *The Deerslayer*, exhibits a similar concept in his presentation of Chingachgook, the Deleware chief, whose name is remarkably like that of Ballantyne's Inuit "giant," which suggests a link in the perspectives of the two authors. In nineteenth-century England the concept of "the noble savage" became part of the controversy between those who subscribed to Primitivism, with its notion of the superior virtues of "heathens," and those who were adamant that salvation could only be achieved through the rituals and sacraments of an established, institutional "Church." For example, Jack Zipes, in *Victorian Fairy Tales*, points out that George MacDonald, noted for his mystical fairy tales, was dismissed as minister by his Congregationalist church for his unconventional views in this regard: "He was convinced that all earthly creatures, including so-called heathens, could discover the essence of divinity in themselves by perceiving God's truth in nature. Thus, salvation could be attained by everyone, a notion which was not acceptable to the Congregational Church" (175).

10 Something might be said of the fact that Badger is the only female being in the story, other than the unnamed, voiceless Inuit women. However, that consideration lies beyond the scope of this thesis.

[11] Similarities here to Kenneth Grahame's *Wind in the Willows*, published in England in 1908, suggest that Grahame's vision of the natural world was a precursor of the later discourse.

[12] Although Washburne is not mentioned in *Wild Like the Foxes*, McGrath indicates that it is highly likely she was involved in the writing of the text (85).

[13] Details of Markoosie's life and literary works can be found in Marie Lium's dissertation.

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